

HISTORICAL **REFLECTIONS ON KENYA**

Intellectual Adventurism, Politics
& International Relations



MACHARIA MUNENE

University of Nairobi Press

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Macharia Munene



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Preface

This book is divided into four sections, each dealing with a particular theme. The first section tackles issues that are found in the realm of ideas. These relate to the perpetual struggle between the forces of control and the forces of mental and intellectual liberation. Africa and Kenya in particular, finds itself constantly struggling to free itself from all types of colonial controls in the form of material, political, and intellectual manipulation.

The second section deals with the colonial legacy of poverty creation, as well as the socio-political conditioning of Africans to dislike each other and to be irresponsible and disunited in the face of external threats. Poverty, hatred of other Africans, and excessive dependency on European powers can be traced to the policies adopted by colonial officials.

The third section on post-colonial Kenya, addresses the political developments since 1963, the involvement of different types of media in those developments, Kenya's foreign policy, and the problem of political party transition.

The fourth section concerns itself with topical issues that continue to affect Kenya which include the question of coalition politics, the lessons of the 2002 elections, the media and corruption, parliament and foreign policy, and Africa's relations with the United States of America.

Acknowledgements

The chapters in this book are an outcome of continuous research and presentations on different issues. In discussing such issues, I have over the years been provoked, sometimes unwittingly and at other times deliberately, by many people to respond to given phenomena. These include colleagues in different universities in and outside Kenya as well as prominent personalities in many spheres of public life. In various ways, they gave me the opportunity to discuss my thoughts and perceptions of the way things are, appear to be, or should be. In her own way, Freida A. Brown, Vice-Chancellor at USIU, supported my intellectual escapades in various local and international fora where some of the ideas were tested, amused some people and seemingly, irritated a few.

I also received a lot of support from the editors at the University of Nairobi Press, particularly Pauline Mahugu and Kimaita Kirimania, who encouraged me to come up with this book touching on different aspects of Kenya's experience. The result is position expositions spanning several years in which I try to respond to particular challenges and phenomena, some have been refined through presentations in different fora where different audiences would raise new questions or present a different way of looking at the same issue.

There are many people who are, in one or another, responsible for my thoughts and writing, who at different times, by providing the occasion or helping to crystalise a particular thought process, pricked my mind to focus on a series of events and try to make sense out of them.

Some of them include academic colleagues such as Joe Kadhi, Gerald Wanjohi, Gabriel Jal, Chege Waruingi, Godfrey Muriuki, Frederick Kangethe, Karega Munene, Margaret Gachihi, Vincent Martines Guzman, David Francis, Cirino Ofuho, Paul Tiyaambe Zeleza, David Anderson, Koyade Soremken, P. Godfrey Okoth, and Makumi Mwagiru. Outside academic circles, and among those who prodded me to tackle certain issues were retired statesmen like Munyua Waiyaki and Julius Gikonyo Kiano, and Kenya government officials including Joseph Kaguthi. The input that these, and other people made, can be gleaned from the chapters of this book.

Macharia Munene
January, 2012

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Chapter One

Thoughts on History as the Cement of Society

Introduction

Kenya has gone through momentous changes that challenge the ordinary person as well as the intellectuals in society. It is particularly challenging history, the one discipline which gave birth to all the others and also the one that attracts a lot of amateurs. It is the one discipline that many people can relate to and at the same time it is one of the most despised, despite its centrality to the well being and the identity of a people, acting as the cement for society.

In contemporary Kenya, for instance, an impression exists that history is not needed and that whatever knowledge one needs, can easily be obtained from philosophy, political economy, legal studies, linguistics, military science and strategic studies, and from the media. Subsequently, history as a discipline is not needed and if history is not needed then certainly Kenya does not need historians—at least not local historians. What historians do, it is assumed, can easily be done by political scientists, economists, lawyers, journalists, philosophers, military strategists, linguists, and an assortment of educators and theoreticians. The outcome of such an attitude in policy makers is not only shortsighted, but is also liable to plunge any nation in a mess.

The challenges

The discipline of history, as a result, faces challenges. Four of these challenges stand out. First, are the perceptions that people have about history. Second, is what can be considered to be the reality of history. Third, is a focus on the situation and the condition of history in Kenya. Fourth, is a conclusion examining history possible, as the cement of society.

The perceptions

Listening to a number of people at different times, it is possible to group general public perceptions about history into four or more aspects. All of them contain an element of validity but none of them is individually complete; each adds something

to the understanding of history. The four perceptions are: history is a mere recitation of dates; history is the propagation of myths about a people or institutions; history is a record of the past; and, history is an irrelevant and useless discipline.

The reality

If those are the perceptions, what are the realities with regard to history? The following observations and suggestions discuss the the reality of history:

Recitation of dates

The existing perception about history as being the mere recitation of dates is deceptive and widespread. In part this is because; the people who previously taught history tended to do it badly, particularly in primary and secondary schools. Some of the teachers drilled the children on numerous dates without bothering to attach meaning to those dates; the methods used were such that few children could understand. Teachers did not make their pupils to think and reason, thus raising questions about the training that the teachers had received. As a consequence, they made history boring, almost a torture; instead of the exciting subject that it is.

There is need for a general attitude change because the realities that need to be emphasized are that history is not simply a recitation of dates. At best, dates are the skeletons of history in which flesh is attached in order to get the appropriate image or picture that historians may want to project.¹

The teaching of history, therefore, should stress the creation of images and lasting pictures in the minds of the reader and the listener of exactly what it is that did happen at a particular time, how and why, and the impact that that happening had on subsequent developments. Although dates are important in the discipline, they are not history.

Propagation of myths

Similarly, history is not a propagation of myths about anything, although myths tend to be incorporated in history. Myths are a collection of beliefs that a people have about what might have happened. Although such beliefs cannot be verified, they constitute the core values of a people and have to be taken in faith. They are, therefore, important to the history of a people because they help to give that people an identity or a sense of being one people.

¹ Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, *The Modern Researcher*, 6th Edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson, 2004), pp.63-65; E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, New Edition(London: Penguin Books, 1957), pp. 7-30; J.H. Adam Watson, "Introduction," in Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of History* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. 7.

The most important set of myths that are found in almost all societies are the myths that relate to the origins of that people. What the myths of origins do is to give a particular people a starting point with regard to who they are. This starting point is often called GOD who at one time or another decreed that this or that should happen to such a people, in such a place, and in such a way. With beliefs in Gods's decrees, the people develop a sense of spirituality and a religion dictating certain practices that are unique, and that become part of the core values of that people or part of their identity.² From the starting point of GOD, therefore, everything else about that people becomes clear and constitutes that people's history.

This, however, does not stop various peoples from trying to propagate certain myths as a way of advancing their cause or to serve particular interests. In the process, great leaders like Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta and Dedan Kimathi and Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah have a lot of myths attributed to them that tend to enhance their sense of mystery and to make them almost superhuman. Kenyatta was rumoured to have had penetrating eyes that could see through almost anyone and that he had special ways of sensing dangers.

Similarly, Kimathi was said to have ability to change his appearances and show up in places that he was not expected to be. Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana acquired some mystic as the Osagyefo who could do the impossible. Irrespective of how myths come up, how they are contrived, and for what purpose, they serve as an explanatory angle to a people's history. They are part of history, but not history.

Records of the past

There is also a perception that history is simply a raw record keeping from the past. But history is more than just record keeping. Records, like dates, are important to history but they are not necessarily history. They are part of the flesh that is, or can be, attached to the skeleton, in order to get the right picture, creature, or entity. Records and dates have to be given meaning or to be interpreted in such a way as to make sense to the people concerned. Records help to shed light on the past, but they are not the past.

It is the work of the historians to go a step further and interrogate the records, find out who made the records or entered the data, his or her biases, counter check for accuracy, for meanings, and for relevance. What is more, as many records as possible about the same phenomenon should be interrogated to check for discrepancies and if discrepancies exist then to find out why that is the case. It

² Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), pp. 42-50; Keith Ward, *Religion and Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 109-112, 256-257; Butterfield, *Origins of History*, pp 13, 19; Watson, "Introduction," p. 9; Cyril Okechukwu Imo, "Cultural Matrix and the Awareness of God: A Case Study of the Nigerian Situation," in Gilber E.M. Ogotu, editor, *God, Humanity and Mother Nature* (Nairobi: Masaki Publishers, 1992), pp. 81, 95-96.

could be that different recorders beheld the event differently and so the recording, though relatively accurate according to the individuals concerned, would have differences.

It is in the process of interrogating the records that different historians, looking at the same documents, end up emphasizing different nuances and engaging in heated debates as to what the exact meaning contained in the documents is. The situation is compounded when there is variation in the recording of known past events. This makes interrogation of records more critical than if there were no variations; records that are not interrogated are dry tools of history but they are not history.

Historians can misread history. It is possible to be sucked into an event so deeply that the historian who tries to apply the lessons learned in a different setting ends up misapplying the lessons of history. This is what might have happened to Henry Kissinger who was captivated by the supposed achievements of Prince Klemens Von Metternich of Austria in maintaining stability and order and not being bothered by moral scruples. Metternich, the master schemer that he was, could not contain the forces of liberalism, nationalism, and national selfishness. Kissinger tried to replicate Metternich only to fail in Angola and to betray supposed American ideals of democracy in Chile. But then, like Metternich, Kissinger was ready to sacrifice justice in order to ensure his type of order.³

Sometimes records can be used for the purposes of misusing or abusing history. This happens particularly when there is contrived selectivity of the records to be interrogated in such a way as to reach a pre-ordained position. In the process, effort is made to develop and cultivate collective amnesia, trying to forget the unpleasant past, and to recreate a new past. In the process, records are adjusted, sometimes destroyed, and new ones put in place to give the expected picture. The dangers of such selectivity include misreading the lessons to be learned from a particular historical phenomenon.

Irrelevant and useless discipline

People subjected to foreign control or that are intended for repression are often conditioned to believe that history is an irrelevant and useless discipline. Worse than that, they are made to believe that thorough understanding of history is tantamount to subversion in a given polity whether it is in a colonial state or an independent country. Because the supposed rulers tend to see history as an empowering instrument that is detrimental to their supposed interests, they try to suppress it by declaring it to be irrelevant.

³ John G. Stoessinger, *Henry Kissinger: The Anguish of Power* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), pp.12-13, 171-173, 211-213.

Yet, there is a contradiction often found in those who try to dismiss history as irrelevant, whether they are rulers or simply influential and powerful people. Some of those who argue that history is irrelevant often engage themselves in trying to rearrange history or enter into myth-making for two purposes. First is to camouflage past failures or weaknesses and to mount self-promotion. They then try to re-invent themselves to suit particular interests. An example of such a person was Henry Ford who declared history to be “bunk”, that the only history that mattered was the one he was making, and then he spent a lot of money and time recreating history.⁴

A second purpose is a political one. All types of colonialists attempt to lead particular societies into decadence and poverty as a control mechanism. This is what the Europeans did to the rest of the world from the 15th Century as they reinvented their past to become glorious, reduced other peoples to sub-humans, and even “relocated” the Egyptians from Africa into a mental Europe. To feel superior, the Europeans struggled to convince themselves that non-Europeans did not have history. To make this belief true, they proceeded to force conquered people in such societies to lose the sense of what was core to their being, their values, their history, as the best way to protect and promote their interests.⁵

The indoctrination was so powerful that it lingered on long after colonialism. Evidence of this could be seen in the statements by political leaders including cabinet ministers to the effect that history is irrelevant. One minister in Kenya reportedly ridiculed history as being stories about the voyages of Vasco da Gama in Mombasa and Malindi. The tragedy was that the minister in question was a Minister of Education which implied that the Ministry of Education did not know the value of knowing what it is that makes people who they are. The consequence of this negative attitude towards self is the deepening of the dependency syndrome at the intellectual level and the adoration that policy makers appear to have for European and North American experts and advisors, some of whom are simply fake.

It is interesting that many of the “experts” and “advisors” come from countries which control their own education and instruments of opinion and attitude formation. Those countries, particularly the United States insist on every pupil and student taking courses on the history of the United States before graduation. Such requirements ensure that as many people as possible are in a position to defend basic American interests at any time because they know them. In contrast, many of our Kenyan leaders, leave alone the ordinary citizen, are ignorant of Kenya’s history, values, and interests and for this reason they are susceptible to

⁴ William E. Leuchtenberg, *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 175-176.

⁵ Sophie Bessie, *Western Supremacy: The Triumph of an Idea?* (London: Zed Books, 2003), pp.11-42.

manipulation by foreign “experts” and “advisors” who claim to know what is in Kenya’s interests, all this happens because some key policy makers think that history is irrelevant.

To claim or to accept the assertion that history is irrelevant, therefore, is to impoverish society and to make it susceptible to external as well as internal manipulations; societies that consider history to be irrelevant end up losing their identity and are subjected either to foreign control or to tyranny as its members are turned into someone else’s “happy slaves”. History is, therefore, relevant and critical to a people who value their identity and are determined to remain free.

Focus on the situation in Kenya

To understand some of the events taking place in a small country such as Kenya and how to respond appropriately, it may be necessary to undertake for instance, a historical analysis from different angles. The first angle, would be a look at contemporary Kenya, second, an examination of the Mau Mau legacy, third, Kenya’s class structure, and fourth, is to analyse the condition of the post-modern colonialism in which Kenya, finds itself.

Contemporary Kenya

One of the most noticeable phenomena in contemporary Kenya is the vibrancy and resilience of the people even after undergoing deep trauma; the expanded democratic space; and the expansion of general awareness. Part of the vibrancy is due to a recent proliferation of media outlets and entities called Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and “civil society” organs. The media outlets are in various print forms ranging from mainstream newspapers like the *Nation*, the *Standard*, the *People*, and the *Kenya Times* (now defunct), to the shoestring alternative press often derisively dismissed as the “gutter press”. The gutter press serves as the ventilating avenue for those views and stories that mainstream print press refrain from touching. Some alternative print media have acquired respectability depending on the regularity of the accuracy in their stories. Similarly, in the electronic media there has been an explosion of outlets in the form of radio and television stations that compete to provide a varied range of news and entertainment to a large audience.

There are at least six local different television stations that people can freely tune to and, apart from the local stations, information and propaganda is available on CNN, BBC, SkyNews, Trinity, AlJazeera, and Voice of America. There are more radio stations than television stations, these broadcast in a variety of languages with reach in almost all corners of the country. In addition, the mobile phone, and internet broadband has made accessing information relatively easy.

Kenya is also home to numerous foreign funded NGOs and civil society entities whose rise to prominence can be traced to the political climate of the early 1980s. At the time, powerful Western powers started reassessing their relations with the poorer countries and deliberately made efforts to limit official bilateral dealings between *donor* countries and the Third World. In the place of bilateral dealings, multilateralism was emphasized, and semi-autonomous governmental organs as well as non-governmental agencies were used in dealing with Third World countries.⁶ Other than funding, civil societies and NGOs, they often get their advice and instructions from the *international community*, meaning North America, Western Europe and their global institutions. These entities, therefore, tend to be agents of promoting the agenda of the *International Community*⁷ rather than Kenya's agenda. One, therefore, has to go back in time to the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, in order to understand the emergence and proliferation of media outlets, civil society bodies, and NGOs in Kenya, in 2008.

The Mau Mau legacy and influence

Among the many ills that Kenya is suffering from, is the legacy of the Mau Mau War, which is constantly being re-fought in different arenas. The War was bitter and the benefits did not always accrue to those who bore the brunt of the war.⁸ A few fighters benefited, but the rest appear to have been neglected; in contrast, those who had opposed the war or supported the British colonialists, seem to have benefited the most, inevitably, a feeling of betrayal cropped up and is often the subject of many debates about the Mau Mau War. In the process of those debates, some things occasionally happen that leave people baffled. The Kibaki administration, for instance, appeared to be divided on Mau Mau and in 2003 appeared to be particularly confused on the issue of Stanley Mathenge. The Kenya government went to a lot of trouble to bring in a man from Ethiopia, who supposedly was Mathenge. This man travelled all the way, courtesy of the Kenya government, only to deny that he was Mathenge on arrival, an action which triggered a debacle. A mystery, therefore, existed with regard to the relationship between the government and the Ethiopian "farmer" who had agreed to come to Nairobi, on invitation, all expenses paid by the government because he was

⁶ Gilbert M. Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons, "*Foreign Policy Making in Africa: An Introduction*," in Gilbert M. Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons, editors, *African Foreign Policies: Power and Process* (Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner, 2001), p. 10.

⁷ Macharia Munene, "Promotion of Democracy as a goal of US Foreign Policy: African Responses," in Makumi Mwagiru and Okello Occulli, *Rethinking Global Security: An African Perspective* (Nairobi: Nairobi: Heinrich Boll Foundation, 2006), pp. 40-60.

⁸ Maina wa Kinyatti, *Mau Mau: A Revolution Betrayed*, Second Edition (London: Vita Books, 2000), 55-61; John Githongo, Opinion, "Why Does Kenya Hate Its Heroes So Much?" *The East African*, Monday, February 28, 2000.

“Mathenge”.⁹ The impression created was that the government was very foolish; it could easily be duped by an old Ethiopian. Even when doubts were raised, and to compound the matter, the government still paid the bill and comfortably returned the “farmer” to Ethiopia. No action was taken, nor is likely to be taken against the supposed “conman”.

To try and unravel the confusion in some of these events, therefore, one has to go back in time to the War of the 1950s, with all its dimensions, in order to understand some things in the Kibaki administration with regard to the Mau Mau war. There were also debates as to who a national hero is, this arose out of regular calls for the exhumation of the body of Dedan Kimathi; as a result of such calls, a statue of Kimathi was erected in Nairobi, there was the subsequent elevation of a technical college in Nyeri into Kimathi University college, and the creation of a commission led by Prof. Vincent Simuyu to determine exactly who a national hero is. The country is still not sure who qualifies to be a national hero, nor, given the behavior of some political leaders, a national villain.

The debates also revealed an aspect of hypocrisy on the part of political leaders; these regularly pay verbal homage to the veterans of anti-colonial activities but tend to ignore them where it matters. It took public embarrassment, during an official public celebration commemorating the struggle for independence, for attention to start focusing on individuals like Kimathi’s widow and others such as Achieng Oneko. When he was alive, Oneko used to say, “Give us something to eat when we are alive”; after his death, he was accorded a hero’s funeral in Rarieda with Mau Mau veterans singing his praises.¹⁰

As Ali Mazrui wrote, heroes are admired when dead but not alive. Dead heroes are actual assets to political villains who then masquerade as followers of the dead hero knowing that he cannot respond¹¹. Kimathi, therefore, was probably such a hero who was better dead, and unfound, and a lively subject of debate on heroism. History then can explain this hypocrisy.

Most important, the Mau Mau War had a devastating effect on the people, who were most involved in it, those from around Mount Kenya. Lasting impressions of the horrors of war in fortified villages and detention camps where torture was the norm were implanted and seemingly encouraged the growth of a biting socio-cultural chill. The chill instilled fear of fighting and was ingrained in the people, scaring them from asserting themselves, defending their interests with vigour, or taking pride in themselves. That chill promoted and promotes meekness, readiness to submit, an inexplicable sense of collective guilt, and self-doubt; it promoted an

⁹ Joseph Karimi, “Lures that Took Mathenge Away for A Generation,” *Daily Nation*, Friday, May 30, 2003.

¹⁰ Macharia Munene, “Achieng Oneko: The last of the Mau Mau,” *Business Daily*, June 26, 2007.

¹¹ Ali Mazrui, “Thoughts on Assassination in Africa,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume 83, Number 1, March 1968, pp. 50-52.

attitude of cowardice that fueled individualism at the expense of the community. Fearing a repeat of the horrors of the 1950s, the community repeatedly failed to defend themselves from bashing. Indeed, a graduate student at USIU, after analyzing the ethnic clashes of 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007, concluded that, Kikuyu men were “cowards”. If she was right, the perceived cowardice could be due to the devastating chill in the people’s collective body fabric.

The class structure

Kenya is a perplexing living entity; it is difficult to fathom the country without a clear grasp of history. Many in the top echelon of the coalition government of 2008 are products of British norms and thinking. Some are products of education at Mangu, Alliance, and Maseno, and later Makerere in the 1950s and the early 1960s. Others were junior officers in the British colonial service in the late 1950s and early 1960s.¹² These are part of the group of people that inherited the colonial state as youth of the day, formed a new political class, and are the ones still in charge of the country, irrespective of the political party they claim to belong to. The children, of this political class are, supposedly the “younger generation” of leaders and are likely to have attended schools such as St. Mary’s, Lenana, and Nairobi School with some sprinkling from Alliance, Starehe, Mangu, Kitui, Kapsabet and other schools. These ended up at the universities and training colleges, some joined the elite in terms of wealth acquisition and the ability to manipulate the political climate. Once incorporated into the class of the elite, there is little difference with the older members of the top class.

A class structure, therefore, evolved over the years in which the *who is who* at independence, and their offspring seemingly continue to control many things in Kenya as they offer up a semblance of political quarrels merely for public consumption.¹³ In this semblance, they are assisted by the new entrants into the club of elites. Still, the country remains dominated by the relatives and friends of the Kenyattas, the Odingas, the Moises, the Mudavadis, the Ngalas, the Balalas, the Wamalwas, the Ntimamas and Konchellas, the Nyamweyas, the Kibakis, and the Nyagas. Indeed, as a former cabinet minister remarked, whether one liked it or not, Kenya is going to be ruled by the same families.¹⁴ He appears to be right because even the recent disturbances of 2007, were largely class based; they were mostly disputes between members of the same class misusing ordinary Kenyans, to decide who is pre-eminent. They settled their differences and, despite occasional noises

¹² Kamau Mutunga, “*You had Better Have the Right Connections*”, Weekend Magazine, *Daily Nation*, Friday, March 31, 2006, pp. 2-3.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ The minister made the remarks to the author one evening during a seminar for the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Foreign Relations, Mombasa.

about what portion one is getting or not getting, are enjoying working together in the coalition government.

Ironically, those they once misled are increasingly becoming wise to this reality and reportedly have started demanding accountability from their presumed leaders. The elite, however, will always find ways of assuaging the ego of the lower classes, by incorporating a few of the leaders of the lower classes into the elite club or by mounting temporary diversions such as drumming up ethnic hostility. Class interests, activities, and developments, therefore, control and will continue controlling Kenya given that class interests are rooted in history rather than, outside history.

Post-modern colonialism

Part of the developments of the recent past are the regular feuds that Kenya appeared to have with the *international community*, sometimes called *donors* or *development partners*, on what is supposedly good for Kenya. The feud was a consequence of the predicament that Kenya found itself in by becoming overly dependent on *donors*. This over dependency became entrenched in the 1980s at the same time that the *international community* was changing its way of dealing with Third World countries. Bilateral interactions in terms of aid were reduced and emphasis was placed on Third World compliance to International Financial Institutions (IFIs) as a pre-condition for relating to *donors*.¹⁵

Kenya, therefore, became captive to the growing phenomenon of *post-modern colonialism* that made regimes and leaders of countries irrelevant to the control of a country. This is different from *classical colonialism* in which the colonialists politically governed and controlled territories openly and *neo-colonialism* in which control was through leaders of independent countries. In *post-modern colonialism*, leaders are virtually irrelevant and control is through institutions and such organs as NGOs and civil society bodies. The instructions that NGOs and civil society appear to get tend to be those of harassing, and finding fault with, their home states.

Kenya found itself in a *post-modern colonial* bind with its sovereignty being subsequently and systematically eroded. Because of this condition, beginning the 1990's, it became common and expected that people representing *donors* would comment and *make noise*, some times not very politely, dictating what Kenya and Kenyans *must* do in order to get *aid*, and even then, there was no guarantee that any *aid* would be forthcoming. These representatives acted and behaved as if they were the new *governors* of Kenya, in a post-modern colonial set up, and, like the governors in the old classical colonialism that ended in 1963, they had or have little regard for African leaders and institutions and therefore cannot be understood outside the historical context.

¹⁵ Khadiagala and Lyons, "Foreign Policy Making in Africa: An Introduction", p. 10.

In the effort to extricate Kenya from this *post-modern colonial* situation, Kibaki fell foul of the *international community* led by the United States and the United Kingdom and hence the regular feuds that have ensued. This explained the perpetual threats to cut off all aid if Kenya did not accept demands designed to please the *donors*. It accounted for the strange pressures put on the Kenya Parliament and the Executive to enact laws that ultimately could be injurious to Kenyans, ignored others that would benefit ordinary Kenyans, and signed treaties that would negate Kenya's international commitments.

The constant feuds between the *donors* and Kenya, therefore, were a result of a client state trying to free itself from the clutches of the master state; a slave trying to be free from the master.

In that conflict, the *donors* appear to have won. The country is now flooded with "experts" purporting to guide Kenya on how it should carry out its affairs. High Commissioners and ambassadors from *donor* countries are comfortable issuing statements of approval or concern and demanding that certain things be done. They promise to fund this or that top government office that in turn increases their access to critical decision makers in the country, and the Kenyan media appears to have given them a free hand to instruct Kenyans as they wish. To understand this situation we need to understand the dynamics of post-modern colonialism.

Conclusion: history as the cement of society

The discipline of history has repeatedly been maligned by people who should know better, the consequences are the production of zombie-like societies that are supposedly easy to control because they cannot raise issues. Those in control and with short foresight tend to give the impression that history is by its very nature subversive to their interests. This accounts for their pre-occupation with suppressing history and yet many would like to misuse history to remake and present themselves in a favourable light.

One of the reasons why contemporary Kenya finds itself in trouble, for instance, is because of the neglect of its history, it thus, becomes excessively dependent on the goodwill of foreign experts, advisors, and donors among others, whose expertise lies in the ability to convince others to look up to them. These experts value their own history and are clear on how to go about protecting and advancing their own interests at the expense of countries such as Kenya. They are also clear of what to do if a dependent entity tries to free itself from that condition.

Every society that wants to determine its own destiny therefore, has no choice but to take its history seriously. History is the core discipline and the center-piece of every society's sense of being. It pays respect to a chronology of dates and events, examines the importance of myths and its linkages to the identity of a people, and interprets the record of the past in the light of the present for the benefit of the

future of that society. History is the the cement of society, in this sense, all other activities in a society are rooted in history. This is the case whether those activities are socio-politico-economic, or whether they are academic in terms of disciplines.

All the issues in the public arena in a country such as Kenya today therefore, are explainable only through thorough knowledge of history. This is history as a field of interpretation of the past, to give meaning to the present, and to try and safeguard the future. Given that there are forces that try to misuse history to advance nefarious designs, knowledge of history would be one way of safeguarding the future by challenging the designs of hostile forces. The future for a free people, therefore, is history.

Chapter Two

Hazards of Post-modern Colonialism in Kenya

Introduction

Colonialism in Africa has manifested itself in three stages—each with a different emphasis. The first stage, classical colonialism, emphasized direct European rule of African territories and peoples for the benefit of the Europeans. The second stage, neo-colonialism, recognized African states and leaders as vital linkages to the continued exploitation of African peoples and resources, while the third stage, post-modern colonialism, emphasized that states and their leaders are irrelevant to continued exploitation. In post-modern colonialism, international agencies become tools for coercing Third World countries into submission, under one pretext or the other, to the will of the *international community*, meaning Western Europe and North America. With little regard for states, leaders, governments, or the people in those states, and with the backing of the *international community*, these agencies arrogantly impose hazardous conditions on their victims. Among the conditions are demands that governments take measures, and that parliaments enact laws, which end up hurting the citizens of those states.

In many ways, Kenya stands out as an African symbol of everything that is wrong with the different manifestations of colonialism. Its history, from the imposition of British rule late in the 19th Century to the early years of the 21st Century, is one of adverse relations in which forces outside dictate what happens within the country. Classical colonialism ended in 1963, after which there was a neo-colonial period which ended around 1989-90. Thereafter, Kenya was transformed into a post-modern colony in which international agencies that advance and protect the interests of the *international community* issue orders to Kenyan. Kenya, thus, is one of the victims of post-modern colonialism partly because it has been overly dependent on “international” institutions as well as on groups of exploitative countries called “donors” or “development partners”. The arrogance of these “donors” can be viewed from the intense pressure that they have mounted to force the Kenyan government to accept obnoxious laws that would effectively end up in enslaving Kenyans.

Classical colonialism

Classical colonialism in Africa entailed a period of European territorial conquest and the subsequent rule and exploitation of African territories and its peoples. It can be traced to stiff competition for African territories and resources symbolized by the meeting of white powers at Berlin in 1884-1885. The purpose of that meeting, better known as the Berlin Conference on the Partition of Africa, was to stem the prospect of white people killing each other in Africa as they competed to grab African resources. The best way to promote and safeguard the interests of various white people at the expense of the Africans, they concluded was to agree on the rules of partitioning the African continent.¹ Once the rules were set, the European powers then competed to send out missions of conquest, conversion, and plunder and in the process created a number of classical colonies in Africa.

All these classical colonies had a number of distinguishing attributes. First, there was the movement of Europeans from Europe determined to conquer and forcefully govern the people of Africa. Second, was the official creation of colonies to serve European powers. Third, was that rule in the colonies was racially based with white people claiming the moral right to exploit the people of another race in the name of humanity. Fourth, was a tendency to invoke religious, or divine, arguments to explain colonialism as the will of God in favour of white people. Fifth, there was deliberate pauperization of the African both mentally and materially in order to ensure the enrichment of the colonizer. Finally, there was an assortment of resistance and uprisings by the colonized that eventually ended classical colonialism.

The British were key players in grabbing African territories in order, if one accepts Robinson and Gallagher's claims in *Africa and the Victorians*, to deny those territories to other Europeans.² One of the areas they ended up in was East Africa where, they were ruthless in the way that they imposed themselves on various African peoples. For administrative reasons, and to protect the interests of a growing settler community, they split the region into Uganda and British East Africa which in 1920 was re-christened Kenya. The settlers were to be found mainly in Kenya where they aspired to create a white man's country.³

The British desire to create a white man's country clashed with the aspirations of the Africans to be free from colonial tyranny. The relationship between the colonial

¹ Macharia Munene, *The Truman Administration and the Decolonisation of Sub-Saharan Africa, 1945-1952* (Nairobi: Nairobi University Press, 1995), pp.8-23.

² Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961).

³ Keith Kyle, *The Politics of the Independence of Kenya* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), pp. 3-16; Robert M. Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya: The Loss and Reassertion of Imperial Initiative, 1912-1923* (London: Associated University Press, 1993), passim; Richard D. Wolff, *Britain and Kenya: The Economics of Colonialism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 47-67, 132-148.

authorities and the Africans became one of struggle either for colonialists to place the Africans in their supposed place at the bottom or for Africans to throw off colonial overlordship. In the process, colonial authorities wanted all Africans to look up to Britain and unite in promoting British interests. At the same time, they emphasised ethnic differences whenever Africans appeared to unite politically in order to agitate for their rights.

On the part of the Africans, the emphasis was on political unity as a way of fighting colonial rule. The most articulate voice rejecting British rule was Jomo Kenyatta whose *Facing Mount Kenya* was a political attack on the philosophical foundations of colonial benevolence. Colonial tyranny, he argued, thrived on ignorance of the oppressed by enabling the oppressor to claim that repression was good for the victim.⁴ Since colonialism was based on exploitation rather than justice, it was bound to collide with the aspirations of the colonised to be free. The collision came in the form of the Mau Mau War that convinced the colonial authorities that their time was up; classical colonialism, in all its political forms, ended in 1964 when Kenya became a republic.

Neo-colonialism, 1963 to 1990

Political decolonisation removed official territorial control of one people by another and during the Cold War era, led to neo-colonialism whereby, control was indirect through presidents who turned their countries into “client states” of the master states. The Cold War would seem to have created a symbiotic relationship between the leadership of both the master-state and the client-state where the leaders of the client states worked to maintain and protect the interests of the master states. As a result, the leadership in the master state became a handmaiden of repression in the client state in the belief that that would safeguard the interests of the master state. The trouble was that this relationship did not guarantee safety because persistent internal uprisings threatened the long-term interests of the master states and so the leadership in the client states became expendable and irrelevant. Kenya, between 1963 and 1990, fits this image of a neo-colony, within the context of the Cold War, very well.

Kenyatta and neo-colonialism, 1963-1978

After independence, Kenya was subjected to the ideological competition between the United States and its capitalistic allies, and the Soviet Union and its communistic associates. Kenya’s leader, Kenyatta, was a political adventurer who abandoned the dreams of a seat in the House of Commons in the 1945 election on a

⁴ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gikuyu* (Nairobi: Kenway Publications edition, 1978), pp. xv-xxi, 309-318.

Pan-African Federation (PAF) ticket⁵, to participate in the Fifth Pan-African Congress at Manchester, where he stressed accessing political power. “One thing we must do,” Kenyatta told the participants, “... is to get political independence. If we achieve that we shall be free to achieve all the other things we want. Self independence must be our aim.”⁶ What was important for Kenyatta then, was political power, rather than, ideology.

Kenyatta returned to Kenya and inspired the anti-colonial movement that propelled him to the presidency. Jailed for purported involvement in starting the Mau Mau War that put Kenya on the world map as a leading anti-colonial trouble spot, he survived an American/British scheme to make people forget him by creating new leaders for Africans. There was Tom Mboya whom, the British and Americans promoted as the leader of the Africans. There was also Oginga Odinga who deflated Mboya’s political balloon by asserting that Kenyatta was the only leader that the Africans recognized and thereby attracted the wrath of the Western forces.⁷ An ideological competition for the soul of Kenya’s future appeared to have begun with the rivalry between Mboya, supported by the West, and Odinga, supported by the Soviet Bloc.⁸ Kenyatta rode above these two and influencing him became the name of the ideological game.

Despite Odinga’s close identification with the Mau Mau War, Kenyatta was not interested in Odinga’s growing attractions to the communist bloc. He considered himself “a big bourgeois,”⁹ not a petty one and associated with the privileged people like Mbiyu Koinange, son of a colonial chief. Koinange, another political adventurer, was in exile in the 1950s and supported the Mau Mau War.¹⁰ When the Americans noted that the first Lancaster House Conference in 1960 had nearly broken down over the issue of whether or not Koinange should be present, they started being nice to him and, although he had not applied, issued visas previously denied him on advice from the British.

The two Mau Mau suspects, Kenyatta and Koinange, wanted nothing to do with communists. Indeed, Kenyatta made it clear he was not interested in anti-Western

⁵ James R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore’s Path From Communism to Pan-Africanism*, (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 89.

⁶ Jomo Kenyatta, “The East African Picture,” in George Padmore, editor, *Colonial and Coloured Unity: A Programme of Action: History of the Pan-African Congress* (London: The Hammersmith Bookshop edition, 1963), p. 42.

⁷ Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru: An Autobiography* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1967), pp.156-162.

⁸ Michael Blundell, *A Love Affair With the Sun: A Memoir of Seventy Years in Kenya* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1994), p.118.

⁹ Woodford McClellan, “Africans and Black Americans in the Comintern Schools, 1925-1934,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2(1993), pp. 378-381, 386.

¹⁰ Koinange’s comparison of Dedan Kimathi with the government in Mbiyu Koinange, *The People of Kenya Speak for Themselves* (Detroit, Michigan: Kenya Publication Fund, 1955), pp. 72-75.

socialist rhetoric. On the first Madaraka Day, June 1, 1963, Kenyatta warned that the "Marxist theory of class warfare" was irrelevant to Kenya and added: "attitudes which were appropriate when we were fighting for independence have to be revised."¹¹ In the preface to the 1965 Session Paper Number 10 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya, Kenyatta took pains to explain: "Our entire approach has been dominated by a desire to ensure Africanization of the economy and the public service. Our task remains to try to achieve these two goals without doing harm to the economy itself and within the declared aims of our society."¹² He would not, therefore, pay attention to those advocating policies that would disrupt the economy. He went on to tell those complaining about scientific socialism to keep quiet because he had answered their concerns.¹³ The Session Paper which, put Kenya officially in the Western camp, rejected socialism, and its leaders were proud of it.¹⁴

Previous Kenyatta admirers then portrayed Kenya as a neo-colonial state, although that did not bother the Kenyatta regime. Oginga Odinga in his biography, *Not Yet Uhuru*, led and boosted this portrayal, expressing his disappointment with his one time hero, Kenyatta. Seemingly borrowing a leaf from Kwame Nkrumah, who wrote a preface to the book, Odinga attacked Kenya as a neo-colonial state controlled by Britain and to some extent the United States. He had resigned from KANU, and for three years thereafter engaged Kenyatta in open ideological competition through his party, Kenya People's Union (KPU). This open ideological competition through political parties ended in 1969 when the government banned the KPU following political riots in Kisumu.¹⁵

Odinga's deputy in KPU, Bildad Kaggia, was Kenyatta's prison-mate, and wrote *Roots of Freedom* in which he depicted Kenya as a neo-colonial state, called for a socialist system, and complained about Kenyatta ignoring the Mau Mau warriors. With two of Kenyatta's supposedly closest colleagues leading the way, attacking Kenya became a lucrative academic industry. Colin Leys, whose 1974 publication, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism, 1964-1971* situated Kenya in the then popular under-development theory, emphasised continued British control of the Kenyan economy in a supposedly independent Kenya. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, like Odinga and Kaggia, felt betrayed because

¹¹ G. Macharia Munene, "Constitutional Development in Kenya: A Historical Perspective," in Yash Vyas, Kivutha Kibwana, Okech-Owiti, Smokin Wanjala, editors, *Law and Development in the Third World* (Nairobi: Faculty of Law, University of Nairobi, 1994), pp. 58-59.

¹² Kenyatta's statement on "African Socialism" in Jomo Kenyatta, *Suffering Without Bitterness: The Founding of the Kenya Nation* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), p. 273.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The views expressed by Mwai Kibaki during the Democratic Party Presidential Debate between Mwai Kibaki and Benjamin Ndubai, held at Hotel Inter-Continental, Nairobi, August 27, 1997. The author moderated the debate which was hosted by Democrats 2000 Club.

¹⁵ Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), p. 237.

Kenyatta seemingly did little for the ‘freedom fighters.’ In his 1977 publication *Petals of Blood*, he depicted Kenya as a neo-colonial state, and subsequently was arrested and detained, in detention, he wrote another book, *Caitani Mutharabaini* or *The Devil on the Cross*, which was even more devastating in its attack on Kenya as being run by international thieves and robbers, assisted by local ones.¹⁶

The Kenyatta regime chose to be identified closely with the West, did not care much what its critics thought,¹⁷ and accepted the depiction of Kenya as a neo-colonial state especially when compared to the socialist experiment taking place south of the border in Tanzania. It became fashionable to compare Kenya’s capitalistic economic progress and its relative political freedom, evidenced by regular competitive elections in which prominent politicians would lose office, with Tanzania’s forced villagization and nationalization of property and assets in the name of *Ujamaa*. When the East African Community broke down in 1977, it is reported that, one of Kenyatta’s most pro-British advisers, the then Attorney-General, Charles Njonjo, drunk five glasses of champagne to celebrate the breakup.¹⁸ It would seem that whatever critics said about Kenya being a neo-colonial state did not bother the power wielders in Nairobi; after all, they believed in the adage that the eyes of frogs do not stop cattle from drinking water.

Moi and neo-colonialism, 1978-1990

President Kenyatta died in 1978, his successor, Daniel arap Moi, vowed to follow Kenyatta’s *nyayo*, at the same time however, he wanted to have his own imprint, this he symbolized with the well polished ‘fimbo’ or stick, in contrast to Kenyatta’s flywhisk. From it, the ideology of the ‘fimbo’ as a mechanism to control his critics as he struggled to please the West evolved. The Moi regime plunged Kenya into a deep dependency syndrome, as a result of which Kenya developed a false sense of comfort. By March 1985, according to the *Weekly Review*, Kenya had become “the most generously assisted country on the African continent.... The financial aid ... has transformed Kenya into a comparatively prosperous country and an economic power in East Africa.”¹⁹

¹⁶ KANU critics were quick to note the similarity between the meeting of thieves and robbers that Ngugi depicted in *The Devil on the Cross*, and the presidential luncheon held at the Hotel InterContinental on Saturday, December 6, 1997 in which eaters were expected to pay a minimum of Ksh. 100,000.00 and up to Ksh. 5 million for the privilege of *eating* lunch with Daniel Arap Moi. SDP presidential candidate, Charity Kaluki Ngilu, described the luncheon as a gathering of looters. (See *Sunday Nations*, December 7, 1997.

¹⁷ Macharia Munene, “Changing ideologies in Kenyan Foreign Policy,” *African Review of Foreign Policy*, Volume 2, Number 1, August 2000, pp. 36-42.

¹⁸ *The Economist* of London, November 26, 1983, p. 58.

¹⁹ “Financial Review” Section on Development Aid, in *Weekly Review*, March 15, 1985, p.11.

This power depended on the goodwill of big donors such as the United States and the United Kingdom whose largesse was in the form of grants, military training, donation of equipment, and country based assistance programs that ideally were tools of foreign policy for the master states to control the client states.²⁰ As an instrument of foreign policy, foreign aid not only helped to create dependency that gave Kenya a false sense of security, but what was worse, it had the effect of dulling the national collective mind as the donors tended to dictate what Kenyans were to think and do and what legislation to enact.²¹ Aid was conditioned on Kenya following the instructions of the donors.²²

Kenya ended up caught in the web of international chicanery to protect the interests of superpowers, at the expense of small states, as its dependency intensified; Kenya became excessively vulnerable to outsiders. This vulnerability could be observed right from the beginning of Moi's tenure for instance, in 1980; President Jimmy Carter of the United States gave Moi what was a highly publicized treat at the White House for supporting Carter's anti-Soviet policies. The price that Kenya had to pay for that treat was embarrassing; Moi gave the United States access to Kenya's military facilities at the coast at the very time that Carter was acquiring similar facilities from Kenya's traditional enemy, Somalia, including providing guns to Siad Barre in Mogadishu.²³ Moi also joined the American orchestrated boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games, following advice from Carter's emissary, former boxing champion, Muhammad Ali and thus gave the impression that Kenya could be ordered around by a boxer, representing American interests.²⁴ To make matters worse, an American marine, using the same facilities, which Moi had provided, killed a Kenyan woman, a subsequent inquest released him under the claim that the victim was a prostitute. The release left the impression that the Kenya government was incapable of, or unwilling, to protect its own citizens from abuse by Americans.

As well as giving the Americans a free hand, Moi also wanted to have a free hand in dealing with Kenyan critics, among them Jaramogi Odinga who constantly criticized the government for giving facilities to the Americans. Odinga tried to

²⁰ Rubin Patterson, *Foreign Aid after the Cold War: the Dynamics of Multipolar Economic Competition* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1997), p.xxii.

²¹ Philip Ochieng, "Alarming Bid to Dictate to Kenya's MPs," *Sunday Nation*, January 28, 2001; "Kenya-Donor Relations Explained," *East African Standard*, June 28, 2002; Editorial, "They are Building Fortress Europe and Deceiving Us," *The Kenya Times*, July 4, 2002; Editorial, "What More Must Kenya Do?" *The Kenya Times*, June 21, 2003.

²² "Aid: Donors Pledge More," *Weekly Review*, May 9, 1986, p. 13; F.S. O'Brian and Terry C.I. Ryan, "Kenya," in Santayanan Devarajan, David R. Dollar, and Torgny Holmgren, editors, *Aid and Reform in Africa* (Washington DC: The World Bank, 2001), pp.510-515.

²³ Katete Orwa, "Foreign Policy, 1963-1986," William R. Ochieng', editor, *A Modern History of Kenya, 1895-1980* (Nairobi: Evans Brothers, 1989), p.229.

²⁴ A good book on Muhammad Ali and his activities is Thomas Hauser, *Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991). pp. 195-198.

form a socialist party as an alternative to KANU, and, early in May 1982, attacked one party systems that, “sooner rather than later ... become no party systems.”²⁵ To show who was boss in Kenya, Moi reacted by expelling Odinga from KANU,²⁶ and threatening to detain politicians who challenge ministers on policies and introduce ‘socialist’ oriented freelance motions.²⁷

He vowed to discipline academics who talked of freedom and democracy and reportedly inculcated the wrong thoughts to students by teaching “the politics of subversion through books majoring in violence”²⁸ and decided to send them to re-education centres and to create intellectual home guards to guard “against intellectual terrorism, political agitation and subversion in the universities.”²⁹ It would seem that Moi wanted all Kenyans to stop thinking and “to sing” to the tunes that he called; he believed that as leader of a ‘sovereign state’ he had the right to ‘lock up’ dissidents,³⁰ Moi made detention without trial and torture so common that, in 1989, he explained it this way: “Of course we torture people. But we don’t torture everybody. We torture the ringleaders of Mwakenya; otherwise how can we find out information from them? They are bent on destroying our society.”³¹ Moi was surprised that his “friends,” the Americans, now questioned his treatment of subversives who were depicted as Marxists anyway.

The change in the West was rooted initially in the American defeats in Vietnam, and later the experiences of Iran which were explained in terms of Americans always being on the wrong side of particular issues. “Shaken by disillusionment with the Vietnam experience,” wrote former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, “many supporters of Cold War policies either retreated from the field of strategy or, in effect, rejected the essence of postwar American foreign policy.”³² In rejecting the postwar American foreign policy that had led to disaster, however, Americans also looked for a way out of their predicament in order to restore their sense of self-worth and purpose which had been severely undermined during the Cold War. In reviewing previous policy, the West became critical of the authoritarian regimes that it had previously supported. It did this in order to be seen to identify with the aspirations of the ordinary people instead of the wishes of the

²⁵ *Daily Nation*, May 20, 1982.

²⁶ *The Daily Nation*, May 21, 1982.

²⁷ “Focus on Madaraka Day,” *Weekly Review*, May 28, 1982, pp. 27-33.

²⁸ *The Weekly Review*, June 11, 1982, pp.7-8.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

³⁰ Blaine Harden “Kenyans Cite Threats to Stability, Liberties”, *The Washington Post*, March 31, 1987.

³¹ *Africa Analysis*, March 17, 1989, p. 10.

³² Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), p. 29.

ruling elites.³³ It was a way of extricating the West from the international mess it had create and it then made it difficult for Moi to continue asking for Western aid while implementing the ideology of the 'fimbo.' Indeed, Moi was frustrated and where he could, he showed his anger with middle level powers like Norway whose embassy he ordered shut down.³⁴

But given that his main concern was to survive in office, he devised the tactics of trying to endear himself. Indeed, in 1987, he took an ill-advised visit to Washington, dismissed Justus Ole Tipis, his minister for internal security and the Commissioner of Police, Bernard Njiinu, who he castigated as "errant police officers". He also released political prisoners in an effort to clean up his image and the negative publicity he had received following the arrest of two Americans.³⁵ Having released political prisoners and dismissed a few security officials, it is reported that *some high ranking lackeys* asked Congressman David R. Obey of Wisconsin for a "reward" for improving respect for human rights. Subsequently, in May 1988, the House Subcommittee on Africa applauded Kenya's "concrete actions" demonstrating commitment to human rights and democratic freedoms.³⁶

By July 1990, the clamor for multipartism had reached advanced stages. On Saturday, July 7, 1990, subsequently referred to as *saba-saba* a political confrontation between Moi's government and the public and which lasted three days brought into the open the split between Moi and the West with Smith Hempstone, the United States ambassador to Kenya, in the lead. Hempstone had arrived in Nairobi in December 1989 believing that he could transform the Kenyan potentate³⁷ only to change his mind following the news of Robert Ouko's murder. Concluding that there was "obvious high-level government involvement,"³⁸ Hempstone symbolised international challenge to Moi's *Fimbo* ideology as he spoke in favour of multi-partism³⁹ and during *saba saba*, gave refuge to dissidents.

After the *saba-saba* confrontation, Moi was infuriated by the foreign support for dissidents, he could not understand why world critics, he told World Bank Vice

³³ G. Macharia Munene, "Cold War Disillusionment and Africa," in Macharia Munene, J. Olewe-Nyunya and Korwa Adar (eds.), *The United States and Africa: From Independence to the End of the Cold War* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995), pp.25-49.

³⁴ Muthui Mwai, "Kenya Cuts Diplomatic Relations with Norway," *Daily Nation*, October 23, 1990; Joel Kipsongok, "Kenya Cuts Link With Norway," October 23, 1990.

³⁵ Blaine Harden, "Kenya Releases Political Prisoners in Move to Improve Rights Record", *The Washington Post*, February 6, 1988; Robert M. Peress, "Kenya's Leader Moves to Improve Record on Human Rights", *Christian Science Monitor*, February 8, 1988; "Cleaning up the Image", *The Baltimore Sun*, February 15, 1988.

³⁶ *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1988, p. 692.

³⁷ Smith Hempstone, "Africa's Tarnished Jewel," *The National Interest*, Winter 1995/1996, p.54; the same article is also published as "Kenya: A Tarnished Jewel," in *FINANCE: Special Supplement*, Vol.1 No. 2, 1996, p.11.

³⁸ Hempstone, "Africa's Tarnished Jewel," p. 54.

³⁹ *Weekly Review*, May 4, 1990, p. 14.

President for Africa Edward J.K. Jaycox, were “all over me” when “I have maybe three people in detention and Mr. X next door has had 150 for 10 years.”⁴⁰ He, however, did his best to please the Americans and it paid dividends. First, he ordered the scrapping of the hated queue voting system and the restoration of the security of tenure for judges that he had removed. Second, he bailed the United States out of a Libyan problem by permitting American backed rebels to take refuge in Kenya after their failure to oust Muamar Qaddafi. Third, he fully supported the United States in the Gulf crisis. The United States responded to Moi’s overtures positively and as a result, it canceled Kenya’s debt of US\$ 41.4 million and released frozen military aid of US\$5million in “appreciation.”⁴¹

Despite the ‘appreciation’, pressure intensified to force Moi to accept multi-partyism, and he complied in December 1991. This was after political activists called for a political rally at Kamkunji on Saturday, November 16, 1991 to demonstrate to Moi that Kenyans wanted pluralism. The rally never took place because the political leaders and the police spent time chasing each other down the streets of the city, but it produced the desired political effect. The government accused the embassies of the United States, Germany, and Sweden of sponsoring the rally⁴² and staged *majimbo* trials. As a result, the donors meeting in Paris in November 1991, suspended aid for six months and demanded political reforms. Moi then did as ordered and permitted multi-party politics.⁴³

By then, the individual donor countries were reducing their direct involvement in favour of multi-lateral institutions for ordering small countries around. Among the terms used to describe the new trend were globalisation and the New World Order.

Post-modern colonialism, since 1990

Compared to the other two, post-modern colonialism appears confused, stresses relativity and tends to devalue the role of states and particular regimes. Within it is a claim that calls for understanding the victim in his own context, which is like a palliative, to the victim not to complain too much given that his concerns and perceptions are reasonably accommodated. That understanding is mainly pursued by foreigners who then explain to the victims how to understand themselves. Since the victims of post-modern colonialism are not expected to understand their position, they can then be advised, guided, instructed, and ordered to downsize the

⁴⁰ Neil Henry, “More Democracy Urged for Kenya,” *The Washington Post*, November 17, 1990.

⁴¹ *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1990, p. 790; *Weekly Review*, February 15, 1991, p. 22 and February 22, 1991, p.11.

⁴² Robert M. Press, “Kenya’s Moi Blocks Multiparty Rally but Critics See Success,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 18, 1991; *Weekly Review*, November 22, 1991, pp. 13-14.

⁴³ Hempstone, “Africa’s Tarnished Jewel,” p. 55; Robert I. Rotberg, “African Democracy’s Twisting Path,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 30, 1992; Munene, “Diplomatic Collision Course,” p. 90.

states, institutions and services and at the same time open up the country to international operators who assume no responsibility for their exploitative behaviour.⁴⁴

A number of instruments for downsizing states began to crop up in the 1980s as part of the re-evaluation process in order to extricate the West from the international mess it had got itself into during the Cold War. Among these was the creation of the National Endowment for Democracy to promote American values and economic interests through the support of ‘civil society’, independent media, labour unions, and non-governmental organizations in various countries that were critical of their governments.⁴⁵ The aim of support was to safeguard Western interests, from potentially hostile people, by discarding leaders in client states that had outlived their usefulness.⁴⁶ Second, since leaders who are the key players in neo-colonialism could not safe guard Western interests any more, bilateral deals between the master states and the client states were reduced. “Foreign assistance,” Gilbert M. Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons noted, “shifted from a largely bilateral engagement ... to increased multilateral interactions with a wider array of donors and international financial institutions.”⁴⁷ Third, this shift enabled multi-lateral institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) not only to increase their presence in small countries but also to exert intense pressure on the small countries and to blame them for all economic and political failures.⁴⁸ Fourth, there was effort to force countries to accept globalisation or a New World Order in which states were pressed to liberalize internally while accepting global ‘uniformity’.⁴⁹

In globalization, corporate entities and multilateral institutions are not accountable to states, with the probable exception of the United States, know no geographical limitations and tend “towards a deterritorialized global economy.”⁵⁰ They are a ‘new aristocracy’ propagating the gospel of globalisation and, with large global

⁴⁴ Oswaldo de Rivero, *The Myth of Development: The Non-Viable Economies of the 21st Century* (London: Zed Books, 2001), pp. 51-52.

⁴⁵ Larry Diamond, “Promoting Democracy in Africa: United States and International Policies in Transition,” in Macharia Munene, Korwa Adar, and Olewe Nyunya, editors, *The United States and Africa: From Independence to the End of the Cold War* (Nairobi: Easrt African Educational Publishers, 1995), pp. 206-209.

⁴⁶ Munene, “Cold War Disillusionment and Africa,” p. 39.

⁴⁷ Gilbert M. Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons, “Foreign Policy Making in Africa: An Introduction,” in Gilbert M. Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons, editors, *African Foreign Policies: Power and Process* (Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner, 2001), p. 10.

⁴⁸ David Williams, “Aid and Sovereignty: Quasi-states and the International Financial Institutions,” *Review of International Studies*, 2000, 26, pp. 557-558, 567.

⁴⁹ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1997), p.40.

⁵⁰ Gearoid O Tuathail, “Post-modern Geopolitics? The Modern Geopolitical Imagination and Beyond,” in Gearoid O Tuathail and Simon Dalby, editors, *Rethinking Geopolitics* (London Routledge, 1998), p. 23.

bureaucracies; their dictatorial powers erode national sovereignty.⁵¹ Corporates operate with the comfortable knowledge that they are protected by powerful states acting like an international police force.⁵² The most important of these international force's is the United States of America which uses globalisation as a cover and a political tool for ideologically rationalizing the continued exploitation of other regions and peoples⁵³ and which believes, according to Pontian Godfrey Okoth, that international "legality and legitimacy are mere decorations."⁵⁴ These entities and institutions cannot be restrained by 'mere decorations' and have enough power to give orders to little countries to accept what Kissinger termed "a series of proposals for adhering to an American agenda."⁵⁵ Should they fail to understand the instructions on 'American virtues', or fail to heed advise from the 'new aristocracy' and 'missionaries' then, military force could be applied, no good reasons are required for such military force.⁵⁶

The global agencies, therefore, are the new colonialists or post-modern colonialists and they are most vocal, blaming the victims, mainly Africans, for whatever goes wrong. After blaming the Africans, they then make it their business to reorganize the African states and resources in such a way that it hurts the African. In 1989, for instance, the World Bank issued a report blaming Africa's politics for the myraid economic problems in the region.⁵⁷ The effect was to downsize states, make them ineffective in delivering services,⁵⁸ and then emphasise the failure of the states to provide those services. This would, in turn, justify calling for privatization of services within the state, the call for such privatization is made in the name of globalization, which, noted Issa Shivji, aimed at destroying the states' ability to provide services for ordinary people.⁵⁹ It can be argued that multi-lateral institutions ensure continued control and exploitation of African resources without openly involving the master states who remain officially invisible. In this, the all-

⁵¹ Rivero, *The Myth of Development*, pp. 52-56.

⁵² Eric George, "Private Security Companies and Post-modern Colonialism in Africa," M.A Thesis, 2003, Peace and Development Program, Universitat Jaume I, Castellon, Spain.

⁵³ James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, *Globalization Unmasked* (London: Zed Books, 2001), pp. 27, 55, 58, 62.

⁵⁴ Pontian Godfrey Okoth, "The Dishonest Broker in America: A Diplomatic Historians Tour of US-African Relations since 1945," Inaugural Lecture Series No. 1, September 17, 2003, Maseno University, Maseno Kenya, p. 20.

⁵⁵ Kissinger: Does America Need a Foreign Policy, p.30.

⁵⁶ Edward N. Luttwak, "A Post-Heroic Military Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 75, No. 4, July/August 1996, pp. 43-44; Petras and Veltmeyer, *Globalization Unmasked*, p. 65.

⁵⁷ World Bank, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, A Long-Term Perspective Study* (Washington DC: World Bank, 1989), p. 192.

⁵⁸ Rivero, *The Myth of Development*, pp. 55-56.

⁵⁹ Shivji, Issa G. 2000. "Critical Elements of a New Democratic Consensus in Africa." in Haroub Othman, ed. *Reflections on Leadership in Africa: Forty Years After Independence, Essays in Honour of Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere on the Occasion of His 75th Birthday* (Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam Press, 2000), pp. 25-38.

pervading global agencies act as soft-pads for master states to enjoy the fruits of global exploitation without receiving any of the blame.

The blame the African syndrome strategy applied was one of blaming the victim in order to undermine his ability to demand redress; the logic, it is claimed, behind this is that, those who suffer because of Western activities in the world are actually the main ones to blame for their suffering. This logic is initially orchestrated at the intellectual level before being imposed on the ground by diplomatic functionaries and IMF officials.⁶⁰ The logic lays the groundwork first, for the intellectual rationalisation of denying assistance to the victims and second for providing the appropriate leverage to dictate laws to the victim countries. In this way, control is tightened as the victim is made to take responsibility for whatever may go wrong. In this way, functionaries and officials on the ground become instruments of blame shifting and post-modern colonialism.

Moi and post-modern colonialism

Kenya, caught up in this post-modern conundrum, was forcibly reminded that it was a subservient country and that it should not exercise its freedom in ways not approved by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or by the master states who knew what was in the best interests of Kenyans. Officials of the IMF, the World Bank, the American ambassador to Kenya, and the British High Commissioner started behaving like new governors and blatantly issued orders to the Kenya government and parliament. This subordination, which commenced when KANU was still in political power and Moi president, continued after NARC took over power following the election of 2002 and the elevation of Mwai Kibaki as Kenya's third president.

Under KANU and Moi, Kenya was made to feel helpless, for instance, when members of Parliament sought to enact laws that benefited ordinary Kenyans by controlling interest rates and oil prices, they roused the wrath of the IMF and the United States government. Both reacted in a hostile manner with US Ambassador Johnnie Carson warning MPs that "popularity is not always a good measure of sound policy" and that such bills were setbacks to expected donor aid. "Credit, like petrol, is a commodity" that would dry up, Carson argued, if the wrong laws were implemented. He went on to urge the government to meet the conditions imposed by the IMF⁶¹, among such conditions was for the IMF to take over the role of writing laws for Kenya. The IMF offered to send 'experts' to the Central Bank of Kenya and to the Attorney General's chambers and made it clear it was withholding 'aid' until its demands were met.⁶² Experts, complained President Moi,

⁶⁰ On the "Blame the African Syndrome," see Macharia Munene, "Post-modern Colonialism and Africa," ASA Conference Paper, December 2002, Washington DC.

⁶¹ Muna Wahome, "US Envoy Opposes Oil Sector Bill," *Daily Nation*, January 27, 2001.

⁶² Njeri Rugene, "IMF Tough Stand on Aid," *Daily Nation*, January 18, 2001.

started drafting bills “in Laikipia, deep in the bush which were later dumped at the feet of the government for ratification, as if that was its work”⁶³ *Sunday Nation* Columnist Philip Ochieng viewed the exercise as dictatorship from Washington, which did not seem to want Kenya and its parliament to be independent. As soon as parliaments “start making independent decisions, somebody descends on them with a heavy bludgeon. Parliament has become the fig leaf of absolutism.” Ochieng questioned “why it was better for Washington DC to dictate to our parliament than for State House, Nairobi to do the same.”⁶⁴

The answer was that Kenya had fallen into the dependency syndrome and its relations with the West had deteriorated from that of neo-colonialism to that of post-modern colonialism. It had sunk into this trap by relying excessively on “Foreign aid,” which, according to Rubin Patterson of the University of Toledo, was a “tool of foreign policy of the more advanced industrialized nations.”⁶⁵ Dependency had the effect of dulling the national collective mind and thus enabling donors to dictate what Kenyans were to think and do and what pieces of legislation to enact.⁶⁶ This dictatorship seemed to sink to a symbolic low during the debate on the Public Officers Code of Ethics Bill which the then Kabete MP, Paul Muite, claimed was drafted by “foreign masters.” To prove his point, Muite pointed out “a white man” sitting in Parliament in the spot reserved for civil servants. He had then asked, “What is he doing on the benches which are meant for our civil servants unless he is a KANU government foreign master. Are you suggesting you have employed another white man in the civil service after you sacked Richard Leakey?”⁶⁷

Such episodes created an image of Kenya having, what PCEA Reverend Timothy Njoya called, a “master-slave relationship” with the donors who then placed obstacles to economic and political progress.⁶⁸ In that relationship, donors were the masters and Kenyans were the happy slaves to be ordered about. As a result, according to *Washington Post* Correspondent Keith B. Richburg in his *Out of America: A Black Man Confronts Africa*, Kenya was free for white people to move out and about, throwing their weight around without questions being raised. White people, he wrote, “walk around with a kind of built-in immunity, the immunity of

⁶³ *Sunday Nation*, January 21, 2001.

⁶⁴ Philip Ochieng, “Alarming Bid to Dictate to Kenya,” *Sunday Nation*, January 28, 2001.

⁶⁵ Rubin Patterson, *Foreign Aid after the Cold War: The Dynamics of Multipolar Economic Competition*. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1997), p.xxii.

⁶⁶ Ochieng, “Alarming Bid to Dictate to Kenya’s MPs.”; “Kenya-Donor Relations Explained,” *East African Standard*, June 28, 2002; Editorial, “They are Building Fortress Europe and Deceiving Us,” *The Kenya Times*, July 4, 2002; Editorial, “What More Must Kenya Do?” *The Kenya Times*, June 21, 2003.

⁶⁷ *The East African Standard*, May 9, 2002.

⁶⁸ Kimemia Mugo, “Njoya Brands Donors Enslavers,” *The People Daily*, April 29, 2002.

their skin.”⁶⁹ The freedom with which people threw their weight around because they were white was indicative of the subservience into which Kenya had deteriorated.

Kenyans were not supposed to complain; they were simply to do as told. When, for instance, Finance Minister Chrysanthus B. Okemo admitted that recipient countries are coerced into signing unacceptable documents, he was removed from the Treasury.⁷⁰ Similarly, World Bank President, James Wolfenson and, IMF boss, Horst Kohler, forced Moi to dismiss Amukowa Anangwe from the cabinet after the minister dared to criticize the two institutions.⁷¹ Failure to pass the laws demanded such as the KACA bill of 2001 was the perfect excuse for the IMF to withhold expected aid.⁷² Moi desperately complained, “*tumenyanyaswa na kuwekwa kando ... na kuzungushwa kama marinda na World Bank na IMF.*” (We have been oppressed, sidelined, and twisted around like womens dresses, by the World Bank and IMF).⁷³

Moi, however, continued to do as ordered and gave the impression that Kenya was ready to do what the West wanted. He found it appropriate to report to President George W. Bush of the United States and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom about his intentions to retire from office. His announcement to Kenyans that he had assured the two foreign leaders about what he intended to do⁷⁴ was not good for Kenya’s image. Moi’s admission that he effectively answered to foreigners simply reinforced the impression that Kenyans were not in control of their country and that, according to *The East African*, the country’s “foreign policy and legislation is influenced by mercenary gain.”⁷⁵

It was this negative picture on Kenya’s image due to Moi’s eagerness to please the master states that critics attacked. After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington DC, Moi distinguished himself by being the only leader in the world to lead a demonstration as a sign of solidarity with the Americans. The then leader of the Official Opposition, Mwai Kibaki, described the Moi regime as having “knee-jerk” policies and bitingly pointed out that “leading a demonstration

⁶⁹ Keith B. Richburg, *Out of America: A Black Man Confronts Africa* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), pp. 4-7.

⁷⁰ Editor’s Note and also, Chrysanthus B. Okemo, Official Speech While Opening the Conference on Donor Lending Conditions, October 24-26, 2001, as printed in *African Review of Foreign Policy*, Volume 3, Number 2, 2001, pp. 60-64.; “Kenyan Minister Ousted After IMF Row,” BBC News Transcript, November 21, 2001; Willis Okech, “Aid: Okemo Reveals Bretton Woods Secrets,” *Sunday Standard*, April 13, 2003.

⁷¹ Joshua Shitiko, “Attack on IMF-Anangwe’s Undoing,” *The People Daily*, March 3, 2001.

⁷² Mutahi Mureithi, “IMF to Withhold Aid to Kenya,” *East African Standard*, August 16, 2001.

⁷³ *Daily Nation*, July 5, 2002.

⁷⁴ Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) News Transcript, July 16, 2002; *Daily Nation*, July 17, 2002.

⁷⁵ Editorial, “Making Kenya a Police State”, *The East African*, July 7-13, 2003.

on the streets is not what makes policy.”⁷⁶ In their eagerness to please, Kenyan officials seemed to surrender to US pressures to change positions and thus made Kenya appear to be what *Daily Nation* Columnist L. Muthoni Wanyeki termed “perennially ‘reasonable’, meaning we are ready to compromise so long as there’s something tangible ...for us.”⁷⁷ The Moi regime with its “perennial reasonableness,” however, was on the way out of power.

The trouble with the Moi regime’s effort to be in the Western camp was that it plunged the country into over dependency and yet the West had little respect for him and wanted as little as possible to do with him. Subsequently, Kenya suffered for being excessively close to the West and was squeezed between an increasingly hostile West and those who were violently opposed to the *international community* and, thus, considered Kenya to be a surrogate of the West. It was opportune time for Kenya to be attacked as an indirect way of attacking the West.⁷⁸ It was inevitable therefore that international terrorists, bombed Kenya in 1998 and 2002 because of this over dependency on the West.⁷⁹ The irony of this over dependency was that when the anti-West forces attacked, the West turned around and while exonerating itself, inflicted more injury by blaming Kenya

Kibaki and post-modern colonialism

Having attacked Moi’s “knee-jerk” policies, Kibaki was caught up in the irony of Kenya’s over-dependency at the very time that the West appeared determined to inflict injury on Kenya through different applications of the ‘blame the victim syndrome’. He had, for instance, in September 2002, accused Moi of making Kenya “a pariah to our foreign development partners who have always been willing to be a supplementary source of development and budgetary support.”⁸⁰ As president, he hoped to lure the ‘partners’ back but at the same time he did not want Kenyans to experience helplessness just when he had been elected as a ‘feel good’ candidate under the slogan of *yote yawezekana*.⁸¹ His problem however was that his interpretation of what Kenya needed to do was at variance with what the ‘partners’ had in mind. For instance, a conflict arose between Kenya and the partners as to how to interpret Kibaki’s inaugural address, after the election in December 2002. He had stated that he believed in making Kenya “rich once again, earn respect in Africa, and earn respect in the world.” He had also noted that Kenya had been

⁷⁶ Mwai Kibaki, “Specific Policy to Fight Terror Required,” *Daily Nation*, November 21, 2001.

⁷⁷ L. Muthoni Wanyeki, “Let’s Get our Foreign Affairs Together,” *Daily Nation* Comment, March 30, 2002.

⁷⁸ Editorial, “Making Kenya a Police State.”

⁷⁹ Philip Ochieng, “A US Base Would be Suicidal,” *Sunday Nation*, June 22, 2003.

⁸⁰ Quote in *The People Daily*, September 19, 2002

⁸¹ Macharia Munene, “Kibaki’s Moment in History: The Election of 2002 and Its Aftermath,” *The East African Journal of Human Rights and Democracy*, Volume 1, Number 1, 2003, pp.84-87.

attacked twice by terrorists and had pledged to “work closely to root out the causes of terrorism in the world.” He had at the same time stressed that the government “is not supposed to be a burden on the people, it is not supposed to intrude on every aspect of life and it is not supposed to mount roadblocks in every direction we turn in life.”⁸²

How to interpret these statements would be the basis of continuing conflict between Kenya and the United Kingdom, and the United States, who demanded that other countries either support them or be declared hostile for condoning terrorism. For Kenya to earn the respect of Africa and the world, however, it could not continue to be viewed as subservient to Anglo-American whims. Kenya, under Kibaki, made it clear that it wanted to make independent decisions on what its interests were and this pitted Kenya at loggerheads with the US, and the UK, who thereafter became openly hostile to Kibaki’s regime.⁸³ In March 2003, the US and the UK decided to invade Iraq without a UN mandate, they expected dependent countries to toe their line and were not amused by Kenya’s refusal to join what was termed the coalition of the willing, nor even to enter into bilateral arrangements that would exempt American service men and women from international law if they committed crimes. A shift in the discourse on terrorism then occurred with the West being exonerated while the blame was heaped on Kenya for supposedly failing to tackle terrorism effectively.⁸⁴

The shift in the discourse justified concrete actions of punishment on Kenyans. In May 2003, for instance, the US and UK governments issued travel advisories for their citizens not to visit Kenya allegedly, because it was unsafe, this act that had the effect of almost paralyzing Kenya’s tourism industry.⁸⁵ The US State Department also blamed Africans for having “a permissive operating environment” for terrorists due to “porous borders, lax financial systems, and the wide availability of weapons.” The US Congress decided that only Americans injured in the August 1998 bomb blast in Nairobi would be compensated.⁸⁶ Noting that all victims of all nationalities were compensated after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, Florence Ng’ong’a, a victim of the 1998 Nairobi bomb blast, wanted to know why Americans had double standards; she received no response. Douglas Sidialo, another victim, observed that the Americans were

⁸² Mwai Kibaki, Inaugural Address, December 30, 2002, www.statehousekenya.go.ke/speeches/kibaki.

⁸³ Macharia Munene, “Kenya and the US: From Neo-Colonialism to Post-modern Colonialism, 1978 to 2003,” in P. Godfrey Ogoth, editor, *Africa and the USA: Shifts in Foreign Relations* (Nairobi: Acacia Press, forthcoming).

⁸⁴ Mwagiru, Makumi, “The Nationalisation of Terrorism: National Response to Terrorism Through National Legislation,” in Makumi Mwagiru and Maria Nzomo, editors, *International Responses to Terrorism* (Nairobi: Heinrich-Boll / IDIS, forthcoming).

⁸⁵ Kevin J. Kelley, “US Won’t Pay for Terror Losses,” *Daily Nation*, May 31, 2003; Kalonzo Musyoka, “Terrorists Have Won Without Firing a Shot” *Daily Nation*, June 9, 2003.

⁸⁶ Kevin J. Kelley, “No Cash for African Bomb Victims,” *Daily Nation*, May 23, 2003.

simply racist given that even Kenyans had suffered for Americans, Paul Muite, then a legislature, termed the decision not to compensate non American victims: “immoral, exposing the ugly side of the Americans.”⁸⁷ When the Minister for Trade and Industry, Mukhisa Kituyi, tried to plead with the United States over the compensation of all victims, he was told that the “best way of mitigating the economic damage of the threat to terrorism is to effectively contain and prevent terrorist activity.”⁸⁸ The message to Kenya was that the injuries and damages were essentially Kenyan problems, rather than American.

In their enthusiasm to blame Kenyans, Johnny Carson and Edward Clay, the American ambassador and high commissioner, moved into high gear, using threatening language. Carson published an article on June 1, 2003 in the *Sunday Nation*, refuting claims that the terrorists had attacked Kenya because of its closeness to the United States. The threat to Kenya, he argued, was not travel advisories “but rather the terrorists and their sympathizers – the impression created was that Kenya was not doing enough to stop them.” Having decreed that Kenya was not doing enough to stop terrorism, he then laid down steps that Kenya “must take immediately in order to prevent terrorism from destroying its future.”⁸⁹ On his part, Clay told Kenya that “if it wanted to be part of the modern world, it was necessary to have relations with nations such as Britain and America ... and accept that terrorism would be directed at this world.” He further argued that Britain had had “valuable and civilized relations” with the ousted Moi regime which, by implication it was not having with the new NARC government.⁹⁰ The message was that for Kibaki to “have valuable and civilized relations” with Britain, he, like Moi, had to toe the line.

With this mind-frame, the US-UK axis pressed the international panic buttons, and as *Nation* commentator Chege Mbitiru observed, “all but declared Kenya a terrorist nation.”⁹¹ Other than using terrorist threats as a pretext to try and cripple the tourism industry⁹² at the very time that UN agencies were asserting that Kenya was safe,⁹³ the actions of the two “friends” left little doubt that they were punishing Kenya for not openly endorsing their invasion of Iraq,⁹⁴ which, argued Makau Mutua, was internationally illegal and a use of “terror to justify colonialism and the

⁸⁷ David Mugonyi, “Anger at US Bomb Blast Payout,” *Daily Nation*, May 24, 2003.

⁸⁸ Kelley, “US Won’t Pay for Terror Losses.”

⁸⁹ Johnnie Carson, “Fighting Back: What We All Can Do to Fight and Defeat Terrorism,” *Sunday Nation*, June 1, 2003.

⁹⁰ *Sunday Nation*, June 29, 2003, Clay’s Interview with Nation TV’s Louis Otieno.

⁹¹ Chege Mbitiru, “There and About, US Verbal War on Allies Blunder,” *Daily Nation*, June 30, 2003.

⁹² Editorial, “What More Must Kenya Do?” *The Kenya Times*, June 21, 2003.

⁹³ Nancy Khisa and Clarice Jerono, “Kenya is Safe, Asserts UN,” *East African Standard*, June 24, 2003.

⁹⁴ Editorial, “Americans are Free to Pack Up and Leave,” *Sunday Standard*, June 22, 2003.

worldwide suppression of human rights.”⁹⁵ Their claim that Kenya was lax on security sounded hollow given that Kenya had allowed the British and the Germans to set up sophisticated terrorist monitoring equipment and facilities in Kenya, and yet they were not able to prevent the attack on the Paradise Hotel in November 2002, an attack which happened barely months after the British Air Force and the German Navy, had set up camp at Mombasa to monitor terrorist movements in the region using sophisticated spy equipment. The Germans had claimed to have “secured the airport ... and the area where we are lodging.”⁹⁶

It is this set up which might have led Cabinet Minister Julius Sunkuli, then the man in charge of security, to give assurance in June 2002 that all the loopholes through which terrorists could enter Kenya were sealed.⁹⁷ Contradictions of this kind reinforced the views that Kenya was being punished for refusing to behave like a happy slave. A *Kenya Times* editorial advised the United States and its allies “not to try to twist us into adapting foreign policy positions, that endanger us in the guise of building a coalition of the willing against terrorism.”⁹⁸ This advice did not stop the ‘friends’ from coming up with a list of unacceptable requirements which included demands for bases and exemption of Americans from criminal prosecution, and the introduction of an anti-terrorist bill into the National Assembly as a matter of urgency, whose net effect would be to enslave Kenyans as a people.⁹⁹ In a letter to the editor of the *Daily Nation*, titled “Terrorism: Ambassador Spelled Out US Demands,” the Counselor for Public Affairs at the US embassy in Nairobi, Thomas Hart, pointed out that one of the conditions that Ambassador Johnnie Carson had imposed was for Kenya to “quickly pass the Suppression of Terrorism Bill currently before Parliament.”¹⁰⁰

Such demands could be considered insults to the people of Kenya, and, according to Mutua, were ‘obscene’ and had to be resisted.¹⁰¹ Kenyans pressed their government not to comply, and actually saved the government from embarrassing itself. They did not want to return to the days of Moi, when Kenya had the image of being ‘perennially reasonable’ or having a foreign policy influenced by ‘mercenary gain.’ Having attacked Moi’s ‘knee-jerk’ policies, Kibaki was struggling to

⁹⁵ Makau Mutua, “Letter from New York: Let Us Resist American Unilateralism, Not Aid It,” *Sunday Nation*, November 9, 2003.

⁹⁶ “British Forces Against Terror Land at the Coast,” *Daily Nation*, March 26, 2002.

⁹⁷ *The People Daily*, June 18, 2002.

⁹⁸ Editorial, *Kenya Times*, June 21, 2003.

⁹⁹ Editorial, “What More Must Kenya Do?” *The Kenya Times*, June 21, 2003; J. Harrison Kinyanjui, “Anti-Terror Law Will Roll Back Kenya’s Civil Liberties,” *The East African*, June 30–July 6, 2003, pp. 4–5, 17.; Kevin Kelley, “Watch Out, US Rights Groups Tell Kenyans,” *The East African*, June 30–July 6, 2003, p. 5; Mwagiru, “The Nationalisation of Terrorism.”

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Hart, Mailbox, “Terrorism: Ambassador Spelled Out US Demands,” *Daily Nation*, June 19, 2003; Johnnie Carson, “Hitting Back: What we all Can do to Fight and Defeat Terrorism,” *Sunday Nation*, June 1, 2003.

¹⁰¹ Mutua, “Let Us Resist.”

extricate Kenya from the negative image and could not afford to alienate the citizens in order to please the British and Americans.

Apart from refusing to endorse the invasion of Iraq, without a UN mandate, the Kibaki regime showed its relative independence in two other ways. When the long awaited Bush trip to Africa came, the United States home office decided that he should skip Kenya, although it initially had been in the itinerary. The claims that Kenya was unsafe made little sense, indeed, Raila Odinga, then the Minister for Roads and Housing told the Americans, “you are not issuing similar warnings for Egypt, Jordan or Saudi Arabia where there are more terrorist cells.”¹⁰² Bush went to Uganda partly because Yoweri Museveni had supported the invasion of Iraq and had even agreed to exempt American military personnel from international law requirements when they committed war crimes.¹⁰³ The Americans had expected Kibaki to travel to Kampala to greet Bush, the way Moi had done in 1998 to meet Clinton, but instead, Kibaki went to Maputo, Mozambique, to attend the African Union meeting. It was, according to Mwenda Njoka of the *Sunday Standard*, “a patriotic thing for President Kibaki to get busy on something much more useful to him than a mere handshake with Mr Bush.”¹⁰⁴ That way, Kibaki upheld Kenya’s interests against the American expectation and thereby gained respect in Africa.

The refusal to be perennially reasonable again surfaced, during the World Trade Organization (WTO), conference at Cancun, Mexico in 2003. During a meeting with ministers of trade from 20 Eastern and Southern African countries, Kibaki raised concern over the sidelining of Africans in global trade, noting that WTO rules were hostile to developing countries; he called for Africans to mount a concerted effort in confronting the WTO. He wanted African countries to take proactive positions on international trade instead of reacting to what was “already on the table....We must, therefore, spare no effort at ensuring that we negotiate predictable and acceptable terms of trade and market access.” To spearhead Kenya’s role in forging an African position that would demand acceptable terms of trade and access to markets, Mukhisa Kituyi, Kenya’s Minister of Trade and Industry, emphasized the “need to integrate in order to compete effectively on the global market.”¹⁰⁵

During conference, therefore, Kituyi ended up not only as the leader of the Kenya delegation but also the spokesman for the Third World position on opening up markets in the West as well as protecting the economic interests of the poor countries. Among the 21 countries on Kenya’s side were key independent minded

¹⁰² Charles Cobb Jr. “US Terror Warnings and Bush Failure to Visit Anger Nairobi,” *allAfrica.Com News*, June 24, 2003.

¹⁰³ *The East African*, March 28, 2003; “East Africa: US Warming up to ‘Willing East African States,’”

¹⁰⁴ Mwenda Njoka, “What Bush Missed in His Tour,” *Sunday Standard*, July 13, 2003.

¹⁰⁵ Eric Orina and Mburu Mwangi, “Kenya Wants Fair Trade Terms: Kibaki Laments Arbitrary and Unilateral Actions by the EU,” *Daily Nation on the Web*, Thursday, May 29, 2003.

Third World countries as Mexico, South Africa, China, India, Brazil, and Malaysia. Kituyi resisted what he called attempts “to manipulate ... the process, saying that those who have been trying to manufacture consensus, i.e. the EU and the US, we believe, are to blame.”¹⁰⁶ By walking out, Kenya shocked the *international community* and instilled pride in the Third World because it was well prepared.¹⁰⁷

After the evidence of Kenya’s ability to lead a rebellion against the interests of the *international community*, Kibaki was invited to visit Washington and London and was treated to a red carpet reception; however, nothing of substance came out. The contrast between Moi and Kibaki was starkly evident; in 1980 Moi had virtually opened up Kenya to the Americans after a White House treat and had willingly traveled to Kampala in 1998 to meet President Bill Clinton who had snubbed Nairobi. Kibaki however did not endorse Americas invasion of Iraq, failed to turn up in Kampala in 2003 to meet Bush, and his trade minister led a rebellion at Cancun. In Washington, Kibaki was expected to agree to conditions such as allowing American bases in Kenya, to endorse American invasion and occupation of Iraq, and to accept what *Sunday Nation* Columnist Alfred Mutua termed “an illegal and racist terrorism bill.”¹⁰⁸ On his part, the issue was the lifting of the travel advisories, resumption of aid to enable Kenya to become a model of democracy in Africa, and fairness in international dealings. Other than pleasantries and statements of long lasting mutual friendship, however, the two sides did not budge from their positions.¹⁰⁹ Simply stated, Kibaki was not Moi.

With the Kibaki regime not cooperating as expected, despite the red carpet treatment, the *international community* started cooking up new excuses for delaying, or for not resuming, aid. When the IMF, reportedly pressured by the master states, postponed the decision to resume aid from October to November theoretically in order to mount a “debt sustainability assessment”,¹¹⁰ the impression created was that Kenya was being punished for being ‘unreasonable.’ As John Oyuke wrote in the *East African Standard* “ this is a calculated move to force the new government to accede to the security concerns of the US government and to force a quicker sale of non-performing parastatals as well as scaling down some of the overly ambitious social programmes.”¹¹¹ The government’s desire to revive the once profitable parastatals like the Kenya Meat Commission or the Agricultural Finance Corporation was termed a policy shift on privatization, and discouraged.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Paul Redfern, “Kenya’s Major Role in WTO Debacle,” *Daily Nation*, September 17, 2003.

¹⁰⁷ Henry N. Bwisa, “Kenya’s Walkout Makes Developing World Proud,” *Sunday Nation*, September 23, 2003.

¹⁰⁸ Alfred Mutua, “How Our Dependency Has Been Exposed,” *Sunday Nation*, October 12, 2003.

¹⁰⁹ Kevin Kelley, “Kibaki’s US Visit: No Media Savvy?” *The East African*, October 13, 2003.

¹¹⁰ Jaindi Kisero, “Now IMF Postpones Decision on Kenya Aid,” *Daily Nation*, October 29, 2003

¹¹¹ John Oyuke, “IMF Stand on Aid Talks,” *East African Standar*, November 1, 2003.

¹¹² Geoffrey Irungu, “Donors Query Policy Shifts,” *Daily Nation Business Week*, December 2, 2003.

The regular political wrangles among politicians in a democracy, similar to the ones in Washington and London, became the excuse for claiming that there is political instability in Kenya and therefore no investments would be encouraged. One diplomat in Nairobi commended the reforms taking place but gave as an excuse for not giving “budgetary disbursements ... straightaway” the “unhelpful developments that had cast doubts on the country’s long term prospects” among them being political wrangling, the constitutional review, and “murmurs of corruption.”¹¹³ All these were excuses for punishing Kenya.

Conclusion: the hazards of post-modern colonialism

The challenges that Kenya has faced and continues to be troubled by, is because it is overly dependent on the *international community*, having sunk from being a neo-colony into being a post-modern colony. Its efforts, particularly under the NARC regime, to extricate itself from the image of being a Western surrogate into a respectable African country, promoting the interests of Kenyans, collided with the interests of multi-lateral institutions and the master states. It has sought good relations with its development partners and yet, at the same time appears not to be subservient to external dictates. As a result, punishment for being non-cooperative became a norm in an effort to remind Kenya that it was peripheral. The punishment came through a combination of actions by the master states and their multilateral agents, which are part of the the hazards of being a post-modern colony.

Kenya became independent at the height of the Cold War but it never had problems deciding which side of the Cold War divide it would lean towards. Kenyatta, the Mau Mau chief was transformed into an elder statesman who did not seem to worry about Kenya being openly portrayed as a neocolony. Kenyatta was succeeded by Moi who, in the process of stamping his own brand of authority on the country adopted the ideology of the *finbo* through which he demanded that Kenyans stop thinking. This demand led to the destruction of national institutions, the collapse of the economy, and what was worse, made Kenya overly dependent on foreign forces, and excessively vulnerable to external manipulation.¹¹⁴

The repression generated internal resistance to the rule of the *finbo* in a world that increasingly questioned support for tyranny. This questioning was because the belief that the interests of master states could be safeguarded through neo-colonial arrangements with leaders of client states had been disabused. Subsequently, bilateral relations had become secondary to multilateral instruments of control and exploitation. This was part of the West’s self-re-examination and search for better

¹¹³ Peter Munaita, “IMF Aid: Bilateral Donors Still Holding Off,” *The East African*, November 24-30, 2003.

¹¹⁴ Macharia Munene, “National Institutions Response to Terrorism,” Symposium on Responding to Terrorism, Nairobi Safari Club, July 1, 2003 organised by Heinrich-Boll and the Institute of International Studies, University of Nairobi and Heinrich-Boll/IDIS.

agents of control than the individual leaders in a state. In this way, Moi's Kenya was out of tune with this search that ended up making states and their rulers irrelevant to the promotion and protection of the interests of master states. States and their leaders were important in *neo-colonialism* but not in the *post-modern colonial* condition that Kenya found itself in.

A shift had occurred that gradually turned Kenya from a neo-colony into a post-modern colony. In it, old notions of sovereignty were made irrelevant as officials of multilateral institutions and diplomats from master states started behaving like governors. Other forces that were promoted to undermine states and their leaders included 'civil society' and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs), operating at village levels, in the name of helping, while in reality earnestly promoting foreign interests.¹¹⁵ Moi had problems understanding what was going on as he was made to answer not simply to the leaders of master states but also to their global agents. One of those agents, the IMF, gave instructions on which laws the Kenya Parliament was to pass or reject and even went to the extent of drafting the bills. When his ministers complained, these agents forced him to fire them. He had become irrelevant and was not in a position to extricate Kenya from the mess he had plunged it into, when he first indulged in making Kenya excessively dependent.

Kenya's predicament, in the post-Moi period, is that it finds it difficult to free itself from the web of postcolonial entanglements. The destruction of national institutions deepened Kenya's dependency, and efforts to revive some of them, has floundered in the wake of opposition from the *international community*. This dependency made Kenya appear to a surrogate of the West; to be attacked at will by international terrorists. The irony was that the West started shifting the blame to the victim, Kenya, especially after the new NARC regime tried to establish respectable credentials in Kenya, in Africa, and in the world in a way that did not please the master states. In the process, it received numerous pieces of advice on how to run the country, conduct its political affairs and even what sort of laws to pass, some of the advice was detrimental to the interest of the Kenyan people who pressed the government not to comply.

A test of will on how to interpret Kenya's interests, therefore, appears to have arisen. When in March 2003, Britain and the United States, decided to invade Iraq they expected all client states to give support, they were therefore surprised when Kenya did not comply. As a result of Kenya's failure to endorse the coalition of the willing if the United Nations was not willing, various governors mounted a blame shifting campaign that made the victim, Kenya, to appear the villain responsible for international terrorism.

A shift in the discourse on terrorism, that exonerated the West and heaped blame on Kenya, became evident as US and British officials started claiming that

¹¹⁵ Hon. Oburu Odinga, Comments to the author, Saturday, February 21, 2004, Serena Beach Hotel, Mombasa.

terrorism in Kenya was due to Kenya's failure to apprehend known terrorists and to make appropriate laws dealing with terrorists. President Bush then snubbed Kenya during his visit to Africa; Kibaki snubbed Bush by refusing to go to Kampala just to shake hands with the American president. After Kenya led a rebellion at Cancun, Kibaki received a red carpet reception in Washington and London, perhaps in the hope that an understanding would be reached. No tangible agreements however were reached in Washington and London on how Kenya should understand its interests. As a result, new excuses cropped up that had the effect of squeezing Kenya, hard into compliance.

While Kibaki's election made people feel good, it was Kenya's position on controversial issues that placed it on a collision course with some of its development partners, as well as exposing it to the hazards of post-modern colonialism. The Kibaki regime was closely monitored to see how well it responded to the wishes of the *international community* who would determine whether it was as civilized as the Moi regime. Although it is temperamentally in tune with the 'new aristocracy' and 'missionaries' of globalisation, it was its ability to respond to the political demands of Britain and the United states, that would count. Since it appears to have failed the test of having 'civilised relations' with the Americans and the Britons, it was subjected to an assortment of punishments. These included travel ban advisories that kept on being renewed, imposition of conditions that undermine the ability of the state to provide services, through unsolicited advise on how to run its politics, through the IMF delaying and postponing expected loans, and through blaming the victim, Kenya. All this occurred because Kenya was over dependent and had plunged from being a neo-colony in the Cold War in which states and their leaders mattered into a post-modern colony in which the leaders and their importance is relative and almost irrelevant.

Chapter Three

Africans and their Interpreters in International Relations

Introduction

Three episodes or group of episodes spanning more than 60 years help to explain the concept of the interpreters with regard to Africa. The first was in 1938, when an African political activist then living in London and named Jomo Kenyatta published an anti-colonialist book titled *Facing Mount Kenya*. He had been sent to England by the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), to agitate for the rights of Africans and one of the ways he advanced the African cause was by writing the book. In the preface to the book, he commented on the relationship between Africans and their interpreters by thanking his enemies who included “those professional friends of Africa” who struggled hard to ensure that Africans remained ignorant. Those professional friends, he wrote, were “prepared to maintain their friendship for eternity as a sacred duty, provided that the African will continue to play the part of an ignorant savage so that they can monopolise the office of interpreting his mind and speaking for him. To such people, an African who writes is encroaching on their preserves.”¹ The reason the professional friends wanted Africans to remain in ignorance, therefore, was because speaking for Africans was a lucrative occupation for those who masquerade as humanitarians and the protectors of Africans

The second refers to a group of episodes associated with Philip Curtin, a prominent Africanist who held African studies close to his heart. He had virtually been there at the creation of the African Studies Association in the late 1950s, had been one of those academics who had *retooled* to become experts on Africa and had helped to recruit to the University of Wisconsin one of the best known Africanists, Jan Vansina.² When Curtin made statements, people paid attention and in 1995, he attracted attention with an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*

¹ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gikuyu* (Nairobi: Kenway edition, 1978) p. xviii.

² Jan Vansina, *Living With Africa* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994) p. 117.

complaining that African Studies had become 'ghettoised' by the presence of an excessive number of blacks, both American and African. Blacks felt offended by Curtin's remarks and hence a heated debate took place at Orlando, Florida, where the African Studies Association held its annual conference.³ Curtin was no stranger to controversy, having made his mark as an expert on counting the exact number of slaves plucked out of Africa who could possibly have landed in the Western hemisphere, his figure was less than 10 million and he was accused of having racist motives.

The figures were wrong but even if they were correct, so argued Walter Rodney, who reportedly shared a panel with Curtin, the effect was to minimise the crime, which is a racist position. Curtin reportedly blushed and his supporters could not understand Rodney because anyone who knows Curtin knows that he is not a racist.⁴ Curtin survived and had seemingly started a profession of counting slaves. In the Curtin-Rodney exchange, one notes two different ways of interpreting Africa, one white and one black. This difference and acrimony associated with interpreting Africans was essentially repeated at Orlando only that Rodney was then dead and it was Micere Mugo calling Curtin a racist.

Given that Curtin is an expert on what white people think about Africans,⁵ his 1995 position was simple verbalising of the fears of white interpreters who believed that their turf had been invaded by those who should be the subject of interpretation rather than doing the interpreting.

A similar thread is observed in the third episode, which relates to an encounter between two academics with interest in Africa, in a conference in England. One was a professor in a prominent university in North America; the other was a professor in a small university in Africa. One was white; the other was a black African. Both had travelled to England for the conference, each had presented a paper on some aspect of Africa and then they met at a reception. To the surprise of the African, the only thing to come out of the mouth of the North American, as a way of conversation, was a comment to the effect that the African had gone to England for shopping and thus implied there are no shops in Africa. Given that the North American was a highly regarded Africanist, believed to be sympathetic to African interests, the comment ensured that there would be no intellectual discussion between the two. The clear message was that the African should have stayed in Africa and let the highly qualified North American Africanist, who knows what is in the best interest of the African, speak on African issues; such instances can be replicated many times in different fora in different countries.

³ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises* (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 1997), p.i; the author was also present at Orlando.

⁴ Information on the encounter between Curtin and Rodney was received from Suzanne Miers Oliver as well as Rodney himself.

⁵ Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (London: MacMillan, 1965).

The three groups of episodes indicate that not very much has changed in the last 60 years. In the 1930s, interpreting Africa was perceived to be the preserve of missionaries, anthropologists, and an assortment of colonial officials. More than 60 years later, it still appears as if interpreting Africa, in most academic disciplines, is a preserve of non-Africans who constitute a large segment of the interpreters. There may be a bigger variety of interpreters in the field than before but they all seemingly emphasise the old doctrine of keeping Africans away so that they can represent, and exploit, them. For Africans to try and have a mind of their own and then try to give their own interpretation appears to be unwelcome by the interpreters of Africa in North America and in Europe. A struggle therefore exists as to who should be interpreting Africans, for whom, and for what purpose. This paper concentrates on the “professional friends of the African” in the 20th Century; it however does not deal with the position of the Africans in the struggle for interpreting Africa.

White and black interpreters and the colonial state

The business of interpreting Africa has been a contentious one since interpretation has come to mean power to control thoughts and events in Africa and the Africans or related peoples. Right at the beginning of the 20th Century, one sees the beginnings of two approaches to the interpretation of the Africans, one white and one black. One aims at finding the best way to control the Africans, the other aims at finding ways to liberate Africans and people of African descent outside the continent from perceived white oppression. The oppression is viewed as mental and material. Realising this, the African elite and people of African descent have over time tried to reclaim the right to interpret Africa because they believe that the motive behind the position taken by non-African interpreters is to exploit the Africans. These two approaches set the background to two conferences in London in 1900 that were, for different motives, to affect future interpretations of the Africans.

One was organised by black elite as a Pan-Africanist meeting and brought together blacks from the African continent, the Caribbean and North America. They all hoped to find ways of countering existing anti-black attitudes by pointing to the previous achievements in Africa as evidence of the capability of blacks in the past and in the future. Indeed, one of the most intransigent in this regard was W. E. B. DuBois, a black American who announced his presence in that 1900 Pan-African Congress by declaring that the problem of the 20th Century would be one of colour line, involving a struggle between rulers who happened to be white and the ruled who happened to be mainly black. He set himself to be the interpreter of the Africans mainly to counter claims of inferiority on the part of black people. The most important effort that he made to claim the right to interpret Africa, mainly for the African-Americans was in the editing of *Crisis*, a magazine that he founded for

the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The magazine still exists but with less influence than it used to have.⁶

The struggle by DuBois to establish an intellectual base to counter white positions on Africa was seemingly parallel to colonialist effort, with the British in the lead to devote scholarly attention to Africa for the purposes of controlling the Africans effectively. In 1900, the same year that DuBois announced the struggle along the colorline, the British created “the African Society” in memory of Mary Kingsley, a woman who believed in the mental inferiority of the African. An African, Kingsley asserted, “has never made even a fourteenth-rate piece of cloth or pottery.”⁷ Kingsley, wrote J.D. Fage, had visited Africa as a naturalist, and had then shifted her interest “to the peoples of Africa and how they might best be governed.”⁸ It was this African Society that started publishing what would become *African Affairs*, which notable British Africanists, as well as officials with interest in Africa, made known and widely read, their views on Africa. Within the pages of *African Affairs*, particularly in the colonial period, one finds numerous articles on how best to govern the natives or run the colonies or explanations of what colonial policy is or should be. It tended to have authoritative monopoly on how to interpret Africa, since colonial officials ensured that alternative views would not be heard. At least, that was what happened to Marcus Garvey’s *Negro World*.

Over time, little has changed with regard to *African Affairs* and Kingsley’s dream of studying Africans in order to govern or exploit them effectively still applies. Articles are both descriptive of the supposedly existing African situation and also prescriptive of what it should supposedly be and who is to do it. One finds, occasionally, one or two African writers as contributors but these remain mere sprinklings in a forum meant for non-Africans to interpret Africans. They are at best tolerated intruders who provide academic *kachumbari* (salsa) to the interpreters’ *nyama choma* (roast beef). *African Affairs* continues to serve the purpose of linking together like-minded interpreters in chronological sequences from the colonial times to the present but it is not the only one, it actually lost that monopoly in the late 1950s and early 1960s, especially, to Americans.

Euro-American rivalry in the 1950s

The entry of Americans into the profession of interpreting Africans was not well received given the European suspicion of American motives in relation to

⁶ Macharia Munene, “The Idea of Black History as Intellectual Rebellion” Keynote Address for the Opening of Black History Month: “A Global African Celebration”, Nairobi, Kenya, February 5, 1997 later printed in KAMESA Newsletter, 1997.

⁷ V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988), p.10.

⁸ J.D.Fage, “When the African Society was founded, who were the Africansists?” *African Affairs*, Vol. 94, 1995, p.380.

colonialism. The desire to be the only one allowed to interpret what others think about Africa is particularly strong where certain powers have interests, with these governments going out of their way to influence what academics think. The British government of the 1950s, for instance, was particularly anxious to have only their side in the Mau Mau conflict in Kenya known. In the process, they tried to link Mau Mau with communism, accused it of atavism, and made exaggerated assertions about Jomo Kenyatta as a terrorist. Anti-Mau Mau materials were carefully distributed to American policy makers, the media, and academics with an interest in African affairs. But the longevity of the war and the fear that communists might actually make inroads forced Americans to start distancing themselves from British and European colonialism.

The emerging position was clearly articulated by US Consul General, Edmund J. Dorsz, in Nairobi, claiming that Africans were vulnerable to communist penetration because of "their naivete and desire to get more and more rights through whatever means offered," wanted the United States to adopt policies that "win and keep the African in the western camp" by ensuring that men on the spot are able "to know the Africans and to take action in time to mold their attitudes towards the United States and the things we firmly believe in." Noting that Africans were increasingly looking to the United States for opportunities denied by Britain, his objective was "to cultivate Africans of the type we believe may become leaders in the next 10 to 20 years. If we pursue these efforts assiduously and can still keep to a minimum British suspicion of our motives, we should be able gradually to develop a good leadership program for this area."⁹

The suspicion that Dorsz worried about was already there, given that Americans were not very subtle in the way they disapproved of the British handling of colonial problems. British Premier Winston Churchill had hoped to persuade the newly elected president of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, to forge Anglo-American unity on issues ranging from "Korea to Kikuyu and from Kikuyu to Calais"¹⁰ but he instead was told to think of an honourable way out of colonialism. Eisenhower wrote, "Colonialism is on the way out as a relationship among peoples. The sole question is one of time and method. I think we should handle it so as to win adherents to Western aims," and then he advised Churchill to issue a statement promising self-government to all the colonies, except those that were military bases, in twenty five years as a way of diffusing the colonial debate in which "we are falsely portrayed as exploiters of people while the Soviets are portrayed as their

⁹ Edmund J. Dorsz to the State Department, Despatch No. 347, May 27, 1957, FRUS, 1955-1957, Volume XVIII, Africa, pp.201-207.

¹⁰ John Colville, *The Fringes of Power: 10 Downing Street Diaries, 1939-1955* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), pp.657-658; *see also* Martin Gilbert, 'Never Despair': Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965 (London: Stoddart, 1988), p. 788.

champion."¹¹ Churchill was not interested in Eisenhower's idea of "bringing forward the backward races and opening up the jungles" and he had no intention of making the suggested speech since he was "sceptical about universal suffrage for the Hottentots, even if refined by proportional representation."¹²

Churchill would seem to have resented Eisenhower's interference, but in this he was not alone. A similar resentment could be seen in regard to a political protégé that the British had identified and groomed the articulate native from Kenya, Tom Mboya. Somehow, and to the chagrin of Margery Perham, the Americans stole him,¹³ A prominent interpreter of Africans at Oxford, Perham had evolved into a respected liberal spokesperson for natives and thereby helped to identify which ones should be groomed. Among her proteges were Obafemi Awolowo of Nigeria and Eliud Mathu of Kenya. She had dumped Mathu once the Mau Mau War broke because, being Kikuyu, he was suspect. She was therefore looking for a new political protégé and Mboya fitted the bill; young, articulate and most important, "he was not a Kikuyu". Stealing Mboya therefore had not been the best way of upholding Churchill's Anglo-American unity on issues of colonialism from "Korea to Kikuyu and from Kikuyu to Calais."

The Americans did more than suggest unacceptable policies and steal a British protégé, they not only proceeded to mount programs to study Africans at universities, but, they also formed a number of of associations for that purpose, seemingly appearing to be playing a game of "catch up". Roland Oliver tells how in 1947, the university of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), decided to mount a serious study of Africans and to predict likely demands in 20 years, he got the job mainly because he had decided to study missionaries in East Africa. By the time that the Americans were organising their association, a sizeable crop of British-Africanists was beginning to be identifiable.¹⁴ One of their concern was on how best to adopt to the forced changes in Africa, while maintaining British interests since, as Kenneth Kirkwood pointed

¹¹ Eisenhower to Churchill, July 22, 1954, in Peter G. Boyle, editor, *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953-1955* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 162-165.

¹² Churchill to Eisenhower, August 8, 1954, in *Ibid.*, pp.166-168; The exchange between Eisenhower and Churchill on colonialism can also be found in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, Volume VI, Western Europe and Canada, pp. 1045-1048, 1050-1052.

¹³ Information on Perham's belief that Americans had snatched Mboya from the Britons was made available to this writer in 1996 by Eduard Bourstin of Boston University. Bourstin was one of Perham's students at Oxford and remembers her anger when Mboya shifted to the American camp.

¹⁴ Roland Oliver, *In the Realm of Gold: Pioneering in African History* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997).

out, the Mau Mau War had made it politically impossible to continue ruling in Africa.¹⁵

It was as the British were struggling with this position that the Americans appeared to be thrusting themselves forcefully into the African picture in order to know Africans, mold them to think like Americans, and win them for the west, universities such as Lincoln University of Pennsylvania and Boston University were useful for that purpose. It was at Lincoln that the Department of State established a "pilot center" under a political scientist with interest in Portuguese colonies named John A. Marcum. President Horace Mann Bond started the African Studies programs at Lincoln in 1950, he was proud of the fact that Lincoln was the alma mater of the best known African nationalists of the early 1950s, Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe, who in turn helped to make it the best known American university among potential African students, later Lincoln university got into trouble with the Portuguese colonial authorities over "the pilot center".

This program reveals why Dorsz had talked of avoiding raising suspicions from colonial powers, ultimately, the Portuguese forced the US government to dismiss Marcum after one year with accusations that the United States was hostile, undermining Portugal with its educational programs and the support for Holden Roberto in Angola; Marcum had actually visited Roberto in Angola. As a compromise and to placate the Portuguese, the US government fired Marcum from the directorship but, at the same time they continued funding, and expanding, the program to include more African countries. Marcum's dismissal thus sent a message that the administration would not condone overt flirting with known anti-Portuguese activists in Africa. While Lincoln may have flirted with anti-colonialists, it was not so overt at Boston University.

Boston University had been one of the first institutions to consider Africa seriously and was in a position to meet the new demand for what Dorsz had termed "the selection of highly qualified personnel" to handle "the highly sensitive nature of our relationship." It all started, in 1953, when the university hired William O. Brown, a sociologist who at that time was in charge of the Africa desk at the State Department, to help mount a postgraduate African Studies program. A Texan, married to a South African, Brown was unlikely to ruffle colonial feathers.¹⁶ Brown did well and by 1958, the State Department's, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, could report that Boston University had been training foreign service personnel for

¹⁵ Kenneth K. Kirkwood, *Britain and Africa* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), pp. 184-185.

¹⁶ Oral Interview with Adelaide Cromwell-Hill, African-American Center, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, January 22, 1996; Elizabeth Colson, "The African Research and Studies Program," Boston University Graduate Journal, Volume VI, Number 6, June 1958, p. 150; Adelaide Cromwell Hill, "African Studies Programs in the United States," *Presence Africaine, Africa Seen by American Negro Scholars* (New York: American Society of African Culture, 1958), p. 371.

four years.¹⁷ Although Boston had not been the first institution to take African studies seriously, it became the most important in training Foreign Service personnel.

Creating the African Studies Association in the United States

One of the ways of challenging the British monopoly in interpreting Africans was to mount an association of interested scholars, in the United States. Brown was also a founding member of the African Studies Association, whose goals included teaching about Africa, disseminating information on Africa, and holding annual conferences. The associations' driving force was Melville Herskovits of Northwestern University,¹⁸ who became its first president when it was founded in New York in March 1957.¹⁹ The members of the association had in common a desire to have more information, albeit for different reasons, among its founder members there were those who supported African anti-colonialists such as St. Clair Drake of Roosevelt University, an African-American, as well as those who did not.

Those opposed to African anti-colonialists included anthropologist, John A. Noon, of the United States Information Agency, who taught about British East Africa at the Johns Hopkins University,²⁰ had been a public affairs officer in Nairobi when the Mau Mau war broke out, and considered African nationalists to be subversive. Brown, the third president of ASA, was a Texan married to a South African, which probably explains his strange 1960 presidential speech where he pleaded for white settlers in Africa whom, he said, were under orchestrated attack. He seemed to be in anguish as he talked of the "painful, near traumatic experience" that white settlers went through as a result of loss of political power in Kenya.

Despite such attacks, however, he believed that use of force would make South Africa "the lonely fortress of white power, the last outpost of white rule in Africa."²¹

¹⁷ Division of External Research and Publications, External Research Report, ER-6, African Programs of U.S. Organizations: A Selective Directory, December 17, 1958(Washington D.C.: Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 1958), p.1.

¹⁸ Sally Falk Moore, "*Changing Perspective on a Changing Africa: The Work of Anthropology*," in Robert H. Bates, V.Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O'Barr, editors, *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.7.

¹⁹ "*Genesis of the Association*," Report of First Annual Meeting, September 8, 1958, in *African Studies Bulletin*, Volume I, Number II, November 1958, p.13.

²⁰ *African Studies Bulletin*, Volume I, No. I, April 1958, p. 14.

²¹ William O. Brown, "The Outlook for the White Man in Africa, Particularly as Settler," Presidential Address, Third Annual Meeting, African Studies Association, Hartford, Connecticut, September 6, 1960, *African Studies Bulletin*, Volume III, Number III, October 1960, pp. 8, 10-11.

The African Studies Association attracted people because of the growing number of fellowships available to researchers on Africa and a chance to be in the forefront of a relatively new field. Donors, including the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation dished out money either to support students studying about Africa or for research on Africa to such universities as Boston, Harvard, Michigan State, M.I.T., Columbia, California, Stanford, as well as to support the activities of the African Studies Association (ASA). There was money to "be used for travel, conferences, administrative expenses, and other costs incurred by the Association" Given that many of those who became members and received grants had not been trained as Africanists, the fellowships gave them a chance to "retool" themselves, abandon their areas of training, and enter the academic virgin territory of African Studies. Some of the retooled academics turned major universities, which previously had no interest in Africa, into pacesetters.

This was particularly the case at The University of Wisconsin, Madison, where Philip Curtin and Jan Vansina, started training graduate students in African History in 1961. Curtin, who had been trained as a historian of the British Commonwealth, joined Wisconsin in 1956 but his interest in Africa was aroused by Ghana's independence in 1957. He was later to establish a reputation as an expert on counting the numbers of African slaves who were brought to the United States. It was Curtin who recruited Vansina from the Congo where he had a job as an anthropological researcher after obtaining a Masters degree in Medieval European History. Vansina would subsequently become the authority on how African oral traditions can be used to reconstruct African history. Together, Curtin and Vansina were successful in soliciting funds from the Carnegie Foundation.. Subsequently, Wisconsin became a kind of intellectual Mecca for Africanists, real and budding, from assorted disciplines who would make their names as interpreters on different aspects of Africa.

Although the work of the Association therefore benefited from the US government's interest in African students and the African studies programs, it did not mean that members were committed to Africans. Encouraged by the Kennedy administration that urged the members to continue helping "to illuminate the African continent" and make its supposed desire to be part of "the Free World" system possible, the number of potential Africanists increased. Their real interest, however, was to study the African because that was where the money was, rather than identify with the African, with financial support from the government as well as organisations such as Ford Foundation, Rockefeller, and Carnegie therefore, universities started African studies programs and accepted more African students in their midst; academics who previously had little interest in Africa decided to "retool" and become experts in African studies. It was mostly these "retreads," as Philip Curtin termed them,²² who had created the African Studies Association in

²² Philip Curtin, "Ghettoizing African History," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 3, 1995, reprinted in *ACAS Bulletin*, No. 46, Winter 1996, p.3.

1957 to promote the interests of the funding institutions but not necessarily those of Africa and the Africans. They were mostly white conservatives who did not want to disturb the status quo in Africa although they tried to understand and explain it.

One of the developments of the Association, that disturbed some founder members, was the growing presence of Africans in the Association. Margaret L. Bates, editor of the *African Studies Bulletin*, observed in 1960 that more Africans attended the 1960 annual ASA conference than the previous meetings. In part, this was because there were more African students in the United States than had been the case before and their impact would be felt later. Given that many of the founder members were anthropologists, which probably explained why they behaved like the anthropologists of the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s who had busied themselves studying tribes in order to make it easier for the colonial state to control the Africans; they actually were not interested in the welfare or the views of the Africans.

It was because of this lack of commitment to Africa that ASA experienced its first crisis. New ASA members tended to be trained Africanists who tried to identify with Africa rather than "retreads." When in 1964, Bates advised the ASA to show some commitment to African interests, therefore, she was addressing a growing concern within the ASA. She was ignored and in the 1965 meeting, the ASA refused to condemn apartheid and thus showed itself to be irrelevant to African concerns. The seeds of future friction were in place but the important thing at that time was that the "retooled" academics, together with their protégés, who became the first crop of Africanists, produced books and articles on Africa.

Interpreting Africa in the 1960s

For the most part, the authoritative source of current secondary information on and about Africa was Colin Legum, the Commonwealth Correspondent for the *London Observer*. He produced a number of books on Africa that reflected the concern of the West on changes in Africa such as *Must We Lose Africa?* This concern for the West's presumed loss is repeated in *South Africa: Crisis for the West*. He also produced books to explain Africa to the Westerners among them being *Africa: A Handbook* and, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide*. In that political guide, Legum explained Pan-Africanism as a movement of emotions and ideas that sought to restore the dignity of black people. "Dignity," he wrote, was "that majestic, magical word in the vocabulary of Pan-Africanists; to regain dignity is the mainspring of all their actions."²³

Africa was also portrayed as having acquired independence aggressively and unexpectedly springing into the world arena, a 1963 publication *Africa and World Order*, edited by Norman J. Pedelford and Rupert Emerson appeared to set this

²³ Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide*, revised edition (New York: Praeger, 1965), pp.13-15.

tone.²⁴ Among the contributors were Rupert Emerson, John Holmes, and John H. Spencer. “Unlike some parts of the world,” the editors asserted, “Africa does not speak with one voice, or one spokesman” and thereby implied that people in other continents or regions of the world speak with one voice; they forgot that Europeans or North Americans do not speak with one voice.

Emerson, based at Harvard University had also argued that what had happened was an “African scramble for independence” characterised on one side by “consolidating states ... within the frontiers traced on the map of Africa with an imperial flourish by colonial powers” and, on the other side, “unceasing agitation... to secure some sort of African unity.” According to John Holmes of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Africa’s hasty emergence on the globe was likely to destroy the British Commonwealth of Nations and the commonwealth countries should prepare for its possible demise because the “continuance of the commonwealth is a matter of will, and for the time being that will ... seems to reside in Africa.” According to John H. Spencer of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, African independence was a “massive incursion ... into the World Organisation” that aroused “curiosity” on what role the Africans would play at the United Nations. They had already flexed muscles when in 1961 they forced the United Nations to reprimand the South African delegate for remarks made in the General Assembly. Previously, the United Nations had ignored the concerns of African states in favour of South Africa. It could not do that anymore.

“Retreads” were particularly active in explaining the new Africa and their supposed value. Gwendolene M. Carter, edited a book on *African One-Party States* in 1962, and noted the academic value, in comparative politics, of single party states in Africa that were clearly not democratic and neither were they totalitarian. Carter, went on to portray decolonisation as a graduation ceremony and thus former colonial powers became some type of alma mater to which the alumni are attached. She wrote, “all the former territories that have graduated from British colonial control have sought to retain a considerable number of the former colonial administrators.”²⁵

There was also a new twist in explaining the relations between Europe and Africa that sounded like sour grapes. This was the claim that Britain never wanted to colonise Africa and that the whole exercise was simply an expensive experience. Robinson and Gallagher, in their *Africa and the Victorians*, set the tone by claiming that Britain had not been interested in African colonies, but rather had been forced to colonise large chunks of Africa because it had no choice. It was actually dragged into the continent by an assortment of forces ranging from missionaries in distress,

²⁴ Norman J. Pedelford and Rupert Emerson, editors, *Africa and World Order* (New York: Prager, 1963).

²⁵ Gendolen M. Carter, “Introduction,” in Gwndolene M. Carter, editor, *African One-Party States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 1-6.

minor consular officials, and most important by the avarice of other European powers such as Germany and France. It was to stop the Germans and the French from interfering with British strategic interests in India that Britain ended up grabbing Egypt, Sudan, Uganda and Kenya, rather than because it wanted to exploit those areas. After loosing India, immediately following the Second World War, and been harassed out of Palestine by the surviving Jewish victims of Adolf Hitler's atrocities, Britain did not need its African colonies anymore. It, therefore, planned to decolonise the continent and cut its costs.

Events in Africa after independence, particularly the series of coups, appeared to call for a new analysis as to why they were taking place, Claude Welch at SUNY-Buffalo was one of those who offered an explanation and pointed out that political violence was not strange to Africa although military intervention to replace civilian rule was a new phenomenon. His "The Roots and Implications of Military Intervention" noted that, initially the military had not been interested in running the countries; they had merely wanted better terms of service from the new government. However, the new recruits who did not have colonial baggage to carry and with whom governments begun using the military for domestic purposes, came to believe they could do the job better than the civilians and hence the coups.²⁶ Ali Mazrui, then based at Makerere, and one of the few Africans accepted in academic circles as an interpreter, thought that there was something strange about the months of January and February because it is at that time that there were coups, and assassinations. Whatever the explanations, the euphoria associated with independence dissipated and the initial dreams of unity seemed to flounder due to domestic as well as international pressure.

Ideological debates and the rise of the tyrants, the 1970s and 1980s

Ideological arguments, particularly in the 1970s, were then brought into the picture to explain Africa, with contrasting examples of Kenya and Tanzania. Kenya under Kenyatta, was portrayed as a neocolonial state, and came in for a good ideological bashing from a number of academics, with assorted motives, who claimed to be 'progressive'. The most influential writer in scholarly circles was Colin Leys, son of a former colonial official, whose 1974 publication *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism, 1964-1971*, situated Kenya in the then popular underdevelopment theory. Using academic sophistry, Leys repeated the same claims made by a settler Micheal Blundell, of Kikuyu tribal domination, more importantly he emphasised the continued British control of the economy in a supposedly independent Kenya. In his view, Kenya was not only neo-colonial; it

²⁶ Claude E. Welch, Jr. "The Roots and Military Implications of Military Intervention," in Claude Emerson Welch, editor, *Soldiers and State in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Military Intervention and Political Change* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp.1-59.

was tribally neo-colonial.²⁷ According to the ‘progressive’ academics, in contrast to neo-colonial Kenya, Tanzania with its *Ujamaa* experiment, was a haven. These progressives included John Saul, Lionel Cliffe, and Professor Clegg, whom Paul Tiyambe Zeleza termed “an academic tourist” who spent a sabbatical in Tanzania, wrote a fat book on African socialism and then got bored and looked for another academic adventure.²⁸

Probably the best known of these ‘progressives’ based in Tanzania, was Walter Rodney who was occasionally portrayed as a ‘radical’ to be avoided in neo-colonial states. His radicalism was based on his book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* which annoyed many of the ‘retreads’ as well as the new crop of Africanists who emphasised the beneficence of colonialism to Africa. Explaining to a group of students why he had written the book, Rodney claimed he had become tired of repeatedly pointing out that some statements in textbooks “were not so” and so he decided to “write a book that was so.” The whole experience of the European contact with Africa, Rodney argued, was a disaster for Africa and was the reason for the underdevelopment in Africa. According to Rodney, one cannot take the cream of society for generations from a place and expect that place to develop; all it does is to underdevelop the place.²⁹ It was not a surprise then that Rodney had a problem with Curtin, a leading ‘retread’, for trying to discredit some of the figures on the number of slaves that landed in the Americas. The numbers floated ranged from 30 to 40 million.

In the 1980s, ideological debates started giving way to a focus of attention on the personality of African leaders, with arguments that, this was part of the reasons why African countries were not doing well. It coincided with shifts in thinking, particularly in Washington, on how to deal with Third World countries. The belief at the time was that, all that was necessary to ensure that natives remained in the Western camp was to pump in ‘development’, despite the fact that authoritarian rule had become discredited and so there was need to find ways of getting on the side of the natives. The lesson that the Americans had learnt from Vietnam and Iran was that they had no business being on the side of plundering autocrats.³⁰ The solution to Western disillusionment with their policies was to “blame” the African and thus minimise their role in creating the mess.

Academics understood the evolving scenario, and started producing books and articles that emphasised the depravity of African leaders and institutions. In the lead, mainly because it is often cited, is Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg’s

²⁷ Macharia Munene, “Changing Ideologies in Kenyan Foreign Policy,” *African Review of Foreign Policy*, Volume 2, Number 1, p.41.

²⁸ Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies*, pp.2-3.

²⁹ This writer was then a graduate student at Ohio University when Rodney made those remarks.

³⁰ Macharia Munene, “Cold War Disillusionment and Africa,” in Macharia Munene, Korwa Adar, and J. Olewe Nyunya, editors, *The United States and Africa: From Independence to the End of the Cold War* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995), pp. 27-30.

Personal Rule in Black Africa Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). Attention on the eccentricities of selected African leaders turned into a fetish among the interpreters culminating in A.H.M. Kirk-Greene's hilarious 1991 article in *African Affairs*, "His Eternity, His Eccentricity, or His Exemplarity? A Further Contribution to the Study of HE the African Head of State." The best way to understand Africa, according to Kirk-Greene, is to study "the cast of Africa's national leaders" who provide "an unusual level of fascination." African leaders tend to be synonymous with the country and are "driven by a daemonic belief that to make their mark ... and reaffirm their legitimacy ... they must invent a philosophy named for them." Among these potential philosophers was Nkrumah whose philosophy "reached a nadir of gobbledygook in his *Consciencism*..." There is also Daniel arap Moi of Kenya who fell "victim to the disorder of bibliomania" and produced *Nyayoism*, supposedly a philosophy based on following Kenyatta's footsteps but one in which "the wearer took a very different size of shoes!" There are also those who ensure they are not forgotten when they die by building basilicas and English type of public schools in the bush, and others even crown themselves emperors. Kirk-Greene summed up that if the verdict on contemporary Africa was to be, "as in seventeenth century France, l'état c'est moi, no one will be happier with such an epitaph than the two hundred African holders of the supreme office of President, Premier and Head of State."³¹

Interpreting the post-cold war

Having established that African Heads of State are to blame for the mess in Africa, the interpreters embarked on analysing the process of messing up and giving reasons as to why it is impossible to have democracy in Africa. There was doubt as to whether African states were actually states in the real sense and here, in 1990, Robert H. Jackson provided a useful guide as he had done in 1982. In his *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*. Jackson refers to Third World countries and African states, in particular, as "quasi" rather than actual. They are actually not proper, not having developed on their own and therefore do not seemingly have the necessary ingredients to make them proper states. Within them, these quasi states violate the norms of a proper state and cannot be internationally punished because they are considered "sovereign" even when the term makes no sense. Implied in his argument is that these states therefore, cannot and should not be taken seriously when it comes to deliberating on matters of international concern. The impression created here is that whatever may be relevant to them, that is the quasi states, can safely be determined by the

³¹ A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, "His Eternity, His Eccentricity, or His Exemplarity? A Further Contribution to the Study of HE the African Head of State," *African Affairs*, Volume 90 Number 359, April 1991, pp. 163-187.

acknowledged members of what is often termed the international community, those that are proper states rather than *quasi*, the interpreters are mostly from the international community, meaning North America and Western Europe.

Jackson's claim that African states were not actually proper states is repeated by Christopher Clapham who describes African states as fragile and "subordinate states" whose organisation is very different "from those that the conventional study of international relations tends to take for granted" and that it would be misleading to deal with them as if they are normal. They lack internal cohesion and identity and institutions are weak, while normal states, for instance conduct their diplomacy through states, in Africa, diplomacy and most other things are privatised commodities not necessarily linked to the state³². Clapham argued that the failure of neo-patrimonialism led to the collapse of the African states whose possibility for survival at the time of independence had been "startling examples of political presumption." Despite good intentions by the international financial institutions, he believed, they had failed in their effort not only to rebuild the African states, but also to achieve their objective, which, in Africa is difficult.³³

The nature of the African state also took an interesting perspective as presented by Jean Francois Bayart, in his 1989 French version of *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. He states that in Africa what counts is the "politics of the belly." Bayart asserted that Africans "are ordinary and particularly ordinary in politics" and as such what counted in post-colonial African states was the arrangement of the whole set of institutions and societal organisation to serve the ruling clique. The West, he argued, turned "political science into pathology when it speaks of sub-Saharan societies as dependent, immature or morbid. This attitude also serves as a useful alibi for many Africans." As far as he was concerned then, the prospects for democracy in Africa were dim.³⁴

Other interpreters followed his lead and started emphasising patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism as reasons why democracy in Africa cannot survive, they tended to situate the politics of the belly in the context of the end of the Cold War, which, supposedly called for a reassessment of what happened to Africa. They started engaging in what Clapham termed: discerning "what is taking place."³⁵ This process of reassessment culminated in an interesting book by Michael Bratton and Nicholas Van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transition in Comparative Perspective*. According to Bratton and Walle, the concept of neo-patrimonialism was the basis to understanding what was happening in African

³² Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³³ Clapham, "Discerning the New Africa," pp. 264-265.

³⁴ Jean Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London: Longman, 1993), pp. x-1.

³⁵ Christopher Clapham, "Discerning the New Africa," *International Affairs*, Volume &4 Number 2, April 1998, p. 263.

states, further, they argued that within the African political system were to be found “those hybrid political systems in which the customs and patterns of patrimonialism co-exist with, and suffuse, rational-legal institutions.”

Just as in patrimonialism, “the right to rule in neo-patrimonial regimes is ascribed to a person rather than to office, despite the official existence of a written constitution.” In the process, personal relations “constitute the foundation and superstructure of political institutions in Africa.” This made neopatrimonialism “the *core* feature of politics in Africa.” That being the case, one cannot expect democracy to survive in Africa except in the distorted form of “*big-man democracy* in which the formal trappings of democracy co-exist with neopatrimonial political practice.”³⁶

Roger Tangri in his *Politics of Patronage in Africa: Parastatals, Privatization, and Private Enterprise*³⁷ argues that the supposed benevolent effort by IMF, World Bank, and donors to develop Africa has failed because “patronage politics” has been the “pervasive form of rule in sub-Saharan Africa since independence. African political leaders have relied on the economic prerogative of the state to create and sustain their regimes in power as well as to enhance their personal wealth.” They have been authoritarian but unlike in East Asia where authoritarianism was responsible for economic growth, authoritarianism in Africa is responsible for economic decay and donors should not expect to achieve much in terms of good governance because African leaders will not relinquish patronage. “...where state office and public resources remain crucial to political leaders remaining in power, then, achieving ‘good’ governance will be a highly contested process with African rulers taking little more than token steps to attain it... sub-Saharan states are still fundamentally patrimonial systems, and patronage politics is not easily undermined.”

The picture portrayed by the interpreters is that Africa is hopeless, indeed, the interpreters move away from stating that the problems in Africa were patrimonial, neo-patrimonial, or based on *tumbo politics* (politics of the belly) to claims that African states thrived in war and chaos and were actually criminal. Not every interpreter believes, like Tangri and Clapham, in the benevolent efforts of the international community and donors, terms that are also used to refer to institutions, organisations, agencies, and corporations that are attached to Western powers and help to look after the interests of those powers in the Third World. There are those who note the collusion between African states and the international community and donors. William Reno’s 1998 *Warlord Politics and the African States* delves extensively into revealing the links between such organisations and

³⁶ Michael Bratton and Nicholas Van de Walle, *Democratic Experiment in Africa: Regime Transition in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

³⁷ Roger Tangri in his *Politics of Patronage in Africa: Parastatals, Privatization, and Private Enterprise* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

institutions, and warlords in Africa, who are portrayed as independent minded people pushing their own economic and even political agenda. The pressure mounted by such warlords only makes them more resourceful than before in finding ways to advance their interests by giving and entering into deals with multinational companies that finance the wars.

A related argument is advanced by Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz in *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrumental*, in which they argue that African leaders actually thrive on chaos and disorder. The seeming disorder in Africa, they argue, is actually logical because it is designed to ensure the continuity of the ruling clique which has found ways of brushing aside pressure from the international community or bending that pressure to serve their personal desires. IMF and World Bank pressure to reduce the bureaucracy, for instance, becomes a good excuse for dismissing employees suspected of supporting one's political opponents.

It is along the above arguments that Jean Francois Bayart with Stephen Ellis and Beatrice Hibou produced *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, a book which revealed how much he had changed his former views of considering Africans as "ordinary in politics," to the extent of concluding that African states were criminal. Bayart portrays the African countries as being essentially criminal states where official plunder of resources and disregard for the law is the norm; presidents are in control of everything including dealing with other countries, while foreign ministers who forget "the absolute pre-eminence of the heads of state and their personal entourages in this respect often learn or re-learn this fact the hard way." Sometimes ministers are killed. In this regard, criminal activities by heads of state are then passed over as diplomatic activities, in collusion with foreign powers including transnational corporations.

The logical conclusion in the criminality of the African states is that they thrive in war and that chaos is the norm, thus there is need to recolonise Africans for their own sake, and probably for humanity. Decolonisation apparently was a mistake given that colonialism in Africa had not lasted long enough to bear fruit that included merchantilism and an inadequate public administration. Indeed, one notes the lamenting quality from David Welsh's *Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Writing from Cape Town, South Africa, Welsh almost laments on the end of apartheid, talking of the brevity of colonial rule in Africa where "European rulers were forced to make use of chiefs and other traditional functionaries in administration."

After the Europeans left, "there has been massive failure of the nation-state idea in Sub-Saharan Africa." In his view, not even the new South Africa was likely or going to succeed.³⁸ Therefore, as William Pfaff argued in *Foreign Affairs*, "disinterested neo-colonialism" that would presumably straighten up the Africans

³⁸ David Welsh, "Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa," *International Affairs*, Volume 72 Number 3, July 1996, pp.477-491.

and eliminate “post-modern barbarism,”³⁹ was essential. Similar arguments had been propounded in the 1880s and 1890s as justification for imposing colonialism on Africans, only that the “barbarism” then was not “post-modern”.

Conclusion: Africans and their interpreters

This paper has dealt with one half of a project on the interpretation of Africa, that of non-African interpreters of the African. These include people who are “professional friends of the African” as well as those who do not pretend to be sympathetic to the interests of the Africans. It similarly has not exhausted the popular debates on democracy or the preoccupation of the interpreters with the issue of ethnicity. Curiously, the interpreters are busy telling readers that ethnic groups, or tribes, and their associated traditions are colonial constructs and therefore European. They therefore did not exist before colonialism. Even the meaning of the word colonialism in the African context has been adjusted to dilute its reference to the imposition of European rule in Africa. Major chapters in John Iliffe’s 1995 *Africans: The History of a Continent* recount tales of Africans colonising the continent from Western Africa to Eastern Africa. Implied here is that colonialism was not simply what Europeans did to Africa, it is also something that Africans did to their continent.

What emerges, as representing the interpreters of the Africans in the 20th Century are the arguments about Africans which keep on shifting with twists and turns in events or perceived crises at particular times. Before the Second World War, the mission of the interpreters was to figure out the most effective way of governing the African and keep him in his place, at the bottom of the human ladder. After the war, and with the increase in anti-colonial agitation, the mission became to figure out the best way to identify and groom potential leaders who would preserve and protect the interests of the West. There were some disputes between the Americans and the Europeans on the approach to take, within the context of the Cold War, in identifying and grooming future leaders who would then be given institutions to run.

In some instances, however, the institutions handed over were deliberately designed to fail thereby creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of the inability of the African to run things, to the amusement of the interpreters. The tendency of the interpreters to ignore colonialist designs in creating the mess in post-colonial Africa has been criticised by among others, Cirino Hiteng Ufoho, who accuses Christopher Clapham and Robert H. Jackson of being “arbitrary and partisan” in their analysis of Africa. If African states have collapsed, he believes, the blame should be shared between those who imposed “colonial superstructures” and those

³⁹ William Pfaff, “A New Colonialism?” *Foreign Affairs* 1995, Volume 74 Number 1, January/February, 1995, pp. 2-6.

running the “post-colonial African political structures.”⁴⁰ An example of colonialist role in post-colonial African political trouble is in the case of the constitutional talks held at Lancaster House in 1962 on Kenya’s independence. At that time, Britain mischievously imposed a *majimbo* document as a constitution on a take it or leave it basis. According to John Lonsdale, this was done in the full knowledge that it would not be viable.⁴¹ In this way, the interpreters could later lament over the failure of the African states and government and thus imply that decolonisation was a mistake.

The interpreters portrayed African decolonisation as an invasion on the existing world order, that old order was one in which the view of apartheid South Africa was representative of Africa but with the increased Africa presence, South Africa was later reprimanded for its views, at the United Nations. It was also a world order in which the British Commonwealth of Nations had actually meant people of British ancestry, but that was changing and the advice from the interpreters was that people should be ready for the collapse of the commonwealth because Africans were likely to have a bigger say in it although they did not speak with one voice. This supposed invasion to world order was also portrayed as an opportunity for academic enterprise, for retooling or retreading because there was some money for interpreting the Africans. Essentially, entrepreneurial academese, filtered into the business of interpreting Africans, which became big business. As a business, academic cartels came into being with Africanists, particularly Kenyatta’s “professional friends of the African,” as gatekeepers to keep out the same Africans who were the subjects of interpretation.

In the process of keeping out the Africans, some of the renowned academic entrepreneurs became intellectual thieves claiming credit for what their subjects had done, at least that was the picture portrayed of Professor Clegg just before his plagiaristic mask was stripped by some African students, among them his former protégé.⁴² Indeed, the supposed African invasion had created all types of opportunities.

With the first crop of trained Africanists occupying academic posts in North America, Western Europe, and in African universities, interpreting the Africans acquired ideological slants, became personalised, and ended up with generalised views of how hopeless Africa and Africans were. The language of the ideological

⁴⁰ Cirino Hiteng Ufuho, “The Legitimacy and Sovereignty Dilemma of African States and Governments: Problems of the Colonial Legacy,” in Bakut Tswah Bakut and Sagarika Dutt, editors, *Africa in the Millenium: An Agenda for Mature Development* (London: Palgrave, 2000), pp.103-107.

⁴¹ John Lonsdale gave a public lecture at the University of Nairobi on Thursday, July 12, 2001 and argued that his reading of British documents relating to Kenya’s independence indicated that British officials did not believe that *majimbo* would work. Lonsdale is editing British documents on the transfer of power in Kenya.

⁴² “The Trail of An Academic Tourist,” in Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies*, pp. 1-9.

debate rotated around such words as dependency, underdevelopment, neo-colonialism, African socialism and development. Depending on one's stand, these were terms of insult or praise. In the 1980s, mainly because of America's disillusionment with its failure to make its dictatorial clients in Vietnam, Iran, the Philippines, or Nicaragua, popular with the people they ruled, the interpreters turned to the shortcomings of the African rulers who then became subjects for intellectual mockery, for instance when European and American rulers write books, or have books written for them, that is not viewed as a problem by the interpreters, however, when Africans do it, it is then depicted as pretensions by his eccentricity to political philosophy, after suffering from the disorder of bibliomania that produces gobbledygook. The verdict from the interpreters is that African leaders are to blame for Africa's woes.

In the post-cold war period, interpreters in addition to the president, Africans and their institutions or lack of them, are portrayed as not being normal; Africans do not have states, they have quasi states which are at best fragile subordinate states, indeed, the most important thing for them is *tumbo* politics or neo-patrimonialism, chaos or even constant war. Africans cannot be democratic, the interpreters claim, because democracy is a European construct and therefore foreign to the African mind. In this way, these interpreters, in league with African dictators, justify the continued despotism in some countries.

As noted by Makumi Mwagiru, claims that Africans cannot be democratic because they do not subscribe to some Western values are, essentially, rubbish since democracy in its true context "exists within universal space" and is not a monopoly of a section of humanity. Interpreters who argue that democracy is a Western preserve "give comfort to many dictators in Africa who argue that Africa traditionally had its own style of democracy quite different from the 'Western' variant."⁴³

The arguments are also an excuse for those who believe decolonisation and the end of apartheid was a mistake, to call for recolonisation of Africa to preserve humanity and end "post-modern barbarism."

Mary Kinsgley's concern in studying Africans in order to govern them therefore still appears to hold among the interpreters of the Africans. This is the case whether the interpreters are "professional friends of the African" or whether they are outrightly hostile to Africans. There was as such little fundamental change in terms of what the interpreter was expected to do to his subject, the African. He was to describe or analyse the African, and then possibly prescribe what should be done by the colonial authorities or the funding governments and institutions. What the funding authorities do with the work of such interpreters is another matter.

⁴³ Makumi Mwagiru, "The Constitution as a Source of Crisis: A Conflict Analysis of Democracy and Presidential Power in Kenya," in Ludeki Chewya, editor, *Constitutional Politics and the Challenge of Democracy in Kenya* (Nairobi: SAREAT, 1999), 173-174.

Chapter Four

Africans and Intellectual Adventurism: East Africa's Intellectual Warriors

I

For roughly two centuries, the African's place in intellectual discourse has been relegated to the periphery, indeed, where it is perceived to exist; it is portrayed as if it is an anomaly, as if it is an exercise in intellectual exoticism. It is at times depicted as an unwelcome intrusion, occasionally to be tolerated by the gatekeepers because it makes them feel good, making them appear the keepers of their lesser brethren, however, the lesser brethren are supposed to remain just that, the lesser brethren to be kept. When the lesser brethren try to keep themselves and refuse to be kept, friction develops which is sometimes more acrimonious than the one experienced in the friction between Africans and those who are openly hostile and determined to keep the Africans in their supposed place of inferiority. Whether outrightly hostile, or pretending to be concerned with the welfare of the African, the custodians of the keys to intellectual paradise are essentially committed to keeping the Africans out of the inner precincts of that paradise.

African engagement in intellectual output, therefore, is an adventure into the forbidden world of intellect and the deeper one gets into it, the more it becomes an exercise in intellectual adventurism. In the process, one discovers the ingrained hostility directed at the African from different quarters. The hostility is not happenstance, but part of a well-orchestrated war aimed at exploiting African resources and the African people, all in the name of humanity. The discovery of such ingrained hostility and the decision to do something about it, or to counteract it, is what led to the emergence of African intellectual warriors, to engage the enemy at different levels. There were challenges at the religious, economic, political and most importantly at the intellectual level, these intellectual challenges tended to lay the foundation for the other types of challenges. Two large time periods in which the African warriors asserted themselves, the colonial period and the post-colonial period, are discernible. The following discussion therefore focuses on selected intellectual warriors in East Africa, with emphasis on Kenya.

II

First are the warriors of the colonial period. These had a relatively easy time because in the colonial days, it was easy to identify that enemy -he was the colonizer who invariably was white, or a *mzungu*, - and enjoyed a lot of privileges that were denied to the Africans or the *natives* as a general rule. It did not matter whether the white man was American, Canadian, British, French, or any other European, he or she was still privileged as *bwana kubwa* or *memsahib* when it came to relating to Africans as inferior beings to be exploited. Equally, the profession of the white man was irrelevant. Whether one was a missionary, an administrator, a government official, a tourist, an educator, a judicial officer, or a businessman, he remained a white man and enjoyed the perks that went with his whiteness. The white man and his whiteness, therefore, was the enemy that the warriors had to confront.

They started by raising questions about the *white mans* habit of saying one thing and doing the opposite which meant that they were engaging in the forbidden activity of thinking since thinking was the preserve of the whiteman. By engaging in natural reasoning, they noted that the Christianity that the white man taught, and the lifestyle that he led, was different from the one that one gets from reading the *Bible*, particularly the *Old Testament*. Subsequently, a belief developed amongst the early warriors that the *white man must* be distorting reality in order to legitimize the exploitation of the African. It is against this background that one can contextualize the emergence of John Owalo with his *Nomia Luo Mission* and Onyango Dunde with his *Mumbo God*, rejecting the teachings of the *white man*. The white man, they believed and taught, would not be allowed into heaven mainly because he was evil.¹

Rejecting anything associated with the white man, religion, material and culture was viewed as liberation. Much more than a religious challenge to the official interpretation of Christianity, Owalo's and Dunde's activities were an engagement in intellectual warfare in which they denied the right of the white man to think for the African on matters of faith. By showing the weaknesses in the white man's logic, they helped to peel off part of the intellectual armour that the white man had donned in order to justify exploiting the African. It was that exploitation that led a Mkamba woman, Siotune wa Kithuke, to urge her followers to reject colonial rule because it was foreign and illegitimate. Her followers went to the extent of organizing an army to fight the British;² they lost the physical confrontation but retained the moral high ground, new tactics therefore were required.

¹ See Bethwell Alan Ogot, "Kenya under the British, 1895-1963 in B.A. Ogot, editor, *Zamani: A Survey of East African History*, Second Edition (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1973), pp. 262-264.

² Ibid.

Rejecting the white version of Christianity was one form of intellectual warfare but there were also early versions of intellectual political warfare that required new tactics. In the new strategy, the presence of colonial rule was accepted as a given. The question was how to work within the colonial rule in order to achieve certain objectives. In this context, the seeming successes of African-Americans in the educational sector attracted the attention of the African elite. Most attractive of these were Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. DuBois; Garvey with his audacious bombast of telling white people to leave Africa for the Africans, and DuBois with his intellectual prowess challenging prevailing racist claims of black mental inferiority. To these, the study of black history was a weapon of liberation and a restoration of the self worth that colonialism had worked so hard to destroy. One of the African elite from Kenya, Harry Thuku, wanted African-Americans to establish schools in Kenya which would become political tools of getting rid of the white man. He then proceeded to ridicule the colonial government and the governor by demonstrating how illogical their claims were³, by using the same education that the colonialists had provided.

Thuku's intellectual challenges to colonial rule, in part, forced a re-evaluation of the type of education that the colonialists should provide to *natives* to ensure that they played their allotted roles as subordinates, rather than policy makers. The Phelps-Stokes Foundation, based in New York, with experience in guiding American blacks to accept technical education as opposed to philosophizing, was subsequently commissioned to make recommendations for the African natives. One of the commissioners, James Aggrey of the Gold Coast, the present day Ghana, had spent time in the US and subscribed to the Phelps Stokes doctrine of education. His role in the commission was to convince blacks to reject intellectual pursuits in favour of technical skills. The commission toured West Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa and Aggrey's message to other Africans was as expected, consistent.⁴ Aggrey and the commission, however, failed in the objective of convincing Africans to abandon philosophical and political pursuits.

The commission's failure was due to the fact that there is a difference or a gap between the message being transmitted and the message being received. With Aggrey variously called a 'Dr.' and seemingly respected by white officials, his emphasis on Africans training to be plumbers, masons, carpenters, and mechanics made little sense to those Africans who aspired to be like him—educated in such a way as to command respect. This was particularly the case with sons of chiefs and other elites who envisioned themselves as leaders but not as minions. From Aggrey's Gold Coast, Francis Kwameh Nkrumah found his way to Lincoln

³ Macharia Munene, "The United States and Anti-colonialism in Kenya," *African Review of Foreign Policy*, March 1999, Volume 1 Number 1, pp. 5-6.

⁴ D.N. Sifuna, "European Settlers as a Factor Influencing Government Policy and Practice in African Education in Kenya, 1900-1962," *Kenya Historical Review*, Vol.4, No. 1, 1976, pp.69-80.

University, ennsylvania, and then the University of Pennsylvania to study, of all forbidden subjects, philosophy. From East Africa, Mbiyu Koinange found his way to Hampton Institute and Columbia University where he studied politics and actually recruited black Americans into the cause for African liberation. He returned to Kenya in 1938 to start the Githunguri Teachers College, a college in which anti-colonial agitation occupied a large part of the curriculum.⁵

On his way back to Kenya, Koinange had stopped in England where he linked up with a political adventurer by the name Jomo Kenyatta, who at the time was busy working on an anti-colonial manuscript. Koinange helped to design the cover of the book, *Facing Mount Kenya*, this was published in 1938, theoretically as an anthropological book on the Gikuyu people. In reality, it was an intellectual attack on the logic of colonialism where the destroyers of organized living of a given people masquerade as agents of civilization. In the process of destroying other people in order to advance colonial interests, Kenyatta argued, colonialism used an instrument that he termed “professional friends” of Africa who claimed to know what was in the best interest of the African. These professional friends then ensured that the African was not given a chance to speak for himself.⁶ In view of the fact that the book was a political and intellectual attack on colonialism, the colonialists banned the book citing its subversive elements and ridicule of colonial benevolence.

III

The second group of intellectual warriors is those associated with the post-colonial period. Their task has not been easy given that there has not been a visible white man to rally against. At the time of independence, intellectuals and politicians seemed to have a common cause, emphasizing African achievements and ability to be as good as the white man in different disciplines. Their common nationalistic goal was to de-abuse the imperialists.⁷ When the intellectuals started raising issues of policy, and performance, and stopped praising the politicians, the two groups parted company. As a result, politicians who previously had been considered heroes became the targets for intellectual arrows and spears. Foremost among these targets was Jomo Kenyatta who, before independence, had qualified to be an intellectual warrior.

⁵ Mbiyu Koinange, *The People of Kenya Speak for Themselves*, (Detroit: Kenya Publication Fund, 1955); Munene, “The United States and Anti-colonialism in Kenya.”

⁶ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Traditional Life of the Gikuyu* (Nairobi: Kenway Publications, 1978).

⁷ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Rethinking Africa's 'Globalization': Volume 1, The Intellectual Challenges* (Trenton, New Jersey, Africa World Press, 2003), p. 74; Macharia Munene, “History in Post-Colonial Kenya: A Tentative Assessment,” Presented to OSSEA History Workshop, University of Swaziland, Kwaluseni, Swaziland, December 4-8, 1989.

Kenyatta, in collaboration with Koinange, was largely responsible for inspiring what became the Mau Mau War but his paradox was that he became the focus of subsequent intellectual rebellion. The symbol of rejecting white rule, he benefited from the Mau Mau War by becoming Kenya's first president in a wave of popularity that emphasized African pride and achievements as a way of asserting African identity. Younger Africans tried to emulate him in different disciplines and often paid intellectual respect to him by referring to *Facing Mount Kenya*, this was the case whether it was religion, history, philosophy, or political science. This emulation and effort to pay intellectual homage could best be viewed from Makerere, the oldest university in East Africa, which distinguished itself as a place where African academicians could shine, as they struggled to prove the point that they were as good as their Western counterpart, their students could subsequently assert their elitism by pointing that they had been to Makerere.

At Makerere, they were taught by an assortment of the first generation of African academics amongst them, John S. Mbiti, Ali Mazrui, and Okot p'Bitek. Mbiti, a Kenyan cleric distinguished himself in religious studies with his publication in 1969, *African Religions and Philosophy*. He argued that African religions had their own theological foundation with past, present and future time frames. Mbiti argued that to Africans, God was a reality in his many manifestations and that Africans are notoriously religious. His point was to prove to Westerners that Africans were not atheistic and did not need Europeans to teach them about God because they already knew about God before any white man set foot in Africa.⁸ At Makerere, where he lectured, Mbiti became a popular reference point for intellectually challenging what the missionaries and other writers had claimed about the ability of Africans to conceptualize God.

Apart from Mbiti, there was also Ali Mazrui whose command of the English language as well as his ability to play games with political ideas in a way that pleased what Bethwell Ogot refers to as academic tribunal, made him a novelty not only to the tribunal but also to fellow Africans. Like James Aggrey forty years before, it was his ability to command the respect of the tribunal that made fellow Africans to both admire and aspire to be like him, and he could wax Western ideas into an African context to suit certain situations. At one time he traced the Greek roots to African political thinking and at another; after Kwameh Nkrumah's overthrowal he termed Nkrumah the Leninist Czar.

Given that both Lenin and the Czar were synonymous with epithets in Western circles, the reference to Lenin and Czar effectively portrayed Nkrumah in a thought provoking way, as a confused man who just happened to have been an African leader. Nkrumah was overthrown in the month of February 1966; on a light note Mazrui suggested that coups in Africa tend to take place in the months of January

⁸ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1969), passim.

and February, and therefore the two months should be abolished.⁹ Irrespective of the position that Mazrui took, it was his clarity that impressed the readers.

It was also in Makerere that one of the sharpest critics of Western scholarship emerged, in the person of a crude Ugandan poet who thrived on causing intellectual consternation; Okot p.'Bitek. His *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol* paid tribute to the Acoli customs through Lawino, wife of Ocol, who ridiculed everything Western, particularly the educated Africans like Ocol who denigrate things African. African songs and dances, he indicated, could be more appropriate tools of instruction to African youth than anything the West could offer. In his *African Religions in Western Scholarship*, he accused African scholars of smuggling Western concepts into African religions. What seemed to irk him was the reliance on Europeans, whose scholarship on Africa he dismissed as "systematic and intensive use of dirty gossip," when Africans tried to take a position. His attack on Kenyatta, Mbiti, and Mazrui was based on his belief that these men, in attempting to justify an African position, had ended up using Western concepts in order to argue an African case.¹⁰ They had essentially used the wrong weapons to fight an all pervading enemy and instead of winning, they had ended up sounding like the enemy they were supposed to have been fighting.

The reaction from the establishment to p'Bitek's writings was anger; his *African Religions and Western Scholarship* had pierced through the armour that the African scholars had been wearing as intellectual warriors. He had stripped them bare, and as the veneration with which they had been held began to decline, they hit back. To Mazrui, p'Bitek was both intellectually "stimulating" as well as "irritating." Bethwell A. Ogot thought that p'Bitek's *African Religions in Western Scholarship* was 'thought-provoking,' blasphemous, and 'disturbing and not a wholly convincing, work.'¹¹

As Director of the Uganda Cultural Centre, he tried to shift theatre performances from European to African themes which were not necessarily complimentary to the new African rulers. As a result, the trouble making p'Bitek irritated the government

⁹ Ali Mazrui, *On Heroes and Uhuru Worship: Essays on Independent Africa* (London: Longman, 1967); ---- *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (London: BBC Publications, 1986); ---- *Ancient Greece in African Political Thought: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered on 25th August 1966 at Makerere University College* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967); ---- "Thought on Assassination In Africa," printed in Martha Crenshaw, editor, *Terrorism in Africa* (Aldershot, England: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1993), pp.5-23; see also Omari H. Kokole, editor, *The Global African: A Portrait of Ali A. Mazrui* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1998).

¹⁰ Okot P'Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1971), passim.

¹¹ Ali A. Mazrui, "Epilogue" to Okot p'Bitek, *African Religions*, pp.121-134; B.A. Ogot, "Intellectual Smugglers in Africa," reprinted in Bethwell A. Ogot, editor, *Reintroducing Man into the African World: Selected Essays, 1961-1980* (Kisumu: Anyange Press, 1999), pp.133-138.

of Milton Obote so much that he was dismissed from his job as the Director of the Uganda Cultural Centre in 1968.¹²

Milton Obote's regime expelled p'Bitek and he ended up at the University of Nairobi, which had started attracting lecturers from Makerere. In 1971, Idi Amin overthrew the Obote regime, subsequently, Ali Mazrui, who reportedly had been intellectually beneficial for Obote and who considered p'Bitek an intellectual irritant, found it necessary to escape, he ended up moving from one American university to another and in the process established himself as an authority on almost any subject pertaining to Africa. Initially, continuing with his earlier pre-occupation of transposing Western ideas into the African situation, the size of his African admirers declined when he was accused of pandering to Western interests at the expense of African interests. He then reassessed himself and came up with *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*; a successful television series in which he tried to redeem himself by demonstrating the positive side of the African continent. In castigating the West for slavery and colonialism, he at the same time appeared to exonerate the Arabs. The West, which had sponsored the program, was angry but Mazrui no longer cared much about what the West thought of him.¹³ He seemingly only cared about what other Africans thought.

The Makerere that Mazrui ran away from was an intellectually desecrated university that gave way, in terms of intellectual glory, to Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. Before taking up jobs in the West, Mazrui had hoped to get an appointment at the University of Nairobi but, even at Nairobi, the political circumstances were such that he could not be accommodated. Unlike Makerere, Nairobi had initially been created to cater for European and maybe Asiatic youth in colonial Kenya and it was only the growing pressure of independence that had forced it to open its doors to a few African students' and teaching staff. For it to have an African orientation, youthful academics were recruited from Makerere on the eve of independence among them being the historian, Bethwell Alan Ogot who was then polishing his PhD thesis on how the Luo had come southwards down the Nile until they reached Lake Victoria and settled in what is now the Nyanza province. He however was not the first African historian at Nairobi, that honor went to Josphat Karanja, it was after Karanja left to become Kenya's first High Commissioner to London that Ogot was recruited to replace him.¹⁴ At the time that

¹² G.A. Heron, "Introduction," in Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1989), pp. 1-10.

¹³ Following the upheavals associated with the Angolan independence in 1975, Mazrui found it necessary to assert his nationalistic credentials after he was accused of treachery for seemingly siding with the United States in the Angolan crisis. His *Triple Heritage* roughly ten years later, however, angered the Americans so much that an announcer in Kentucky put a preamble to the show stating that, he did not agree with what Professor Mazrui claimed.

¹⁴ Munene, "History in Post-Colonial Kenya".

Mazrui wanted a job, Karanja was back in Nairobi as Vice-Chancellor and Ogot was head of the Department of History.

Of the two historians, it was Ogot who distinguished himself as an intellectual warrior against the prevailing attitude on what proper history was; meaning that history was not European history. After becoming chair of the Department of History in 1965, shortly after receiving his doctorate, Ogot went out of his way to transform the Department of History from emphasizing Eurocentric courses to emphasizing African centred courses and sending out students into the field to collect data on Africa's past. As leader of the Kenya Historical Society, he frequently challenged fellow historians to think of different ways of addressing a changing Africa. This challenge was pushed to the point of changing the curriculum in schools. Best known for his *A History of the Southern Luo*, and his edited textbook on East Africa, *Zamani: A Survey of East African History*, Ogot was trapped in his own success as he seemingly became irrelevant to the changing times with some of his own students accusing him of being obsessed with pre-colonial tribal histories. Among these students were Henry Mwanzi who asserted that Ogot had simply indicated that the Luo had a "migratory vein" and erred in emphasizing a single origin. More biting than Mwanzi was E.S Atieno-Odhiambo who claimed that what was important was "to remember the past only in so far as it illuminates the present" but not to respond to racist insults "by presenting any records of our past." He went on to accuse Ogot of appealing to white masters for acceptance because Ogot had justified the use of oral traditions through citing Europeans historians who had done the same. What Ogot had done was "a way of making ourselves respectable, by accepting alien standards of responsibility."¹⁵

The accusation underplays the fact that Ogot has been adaptive and, as Paul Tiyambe Zeleza notes, continues to issue pungent commentaries on scholarly trends as they affect Kenya and Africa.¹⁶ Ogot, besides being a historian, is well known for his close contacts with political power brokers such as Tom Mboya in the 1960s and Daniel arap Moi in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet it was this closeness to the power center that seemed to hurt him as evidenced in his "Siege of Ramogi" which is a cry from the heart of an establishment intellectual who feels that the establishment he served so well repeatedly betrayed his people, the Luo.¹⁷ In Ogot's intellectual anguish and sense of betrayal, however, are the more fundamental question of ethnic relationships within an African state and the role of the intellectual in addressing those feelings. In pointing out that the Luo had been betrayed, Ogot was trying to address the issue intellectually although he did not

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ See Zeleza, Chapter 6, "Out of Africa: The Historical Writings of B.A. Ogot," in *Rethinking Africa's 'Globalization'*, pp.295-323.

¹⁷ Bethwell A. Ogot, "The Siege of Ramogi: From National Coalitions to Ethnic Coalitions, 1960-1998," in B.A. Ogot, *Building on the Indigenous-Selected Essays, 1981-1998* (Kisumu: Anyange Press, 1999), pp. 277-288.

provide a solution to what appears like Luo gullibility in politics. This side of Ogot, in anguish, is less known, what is more recognized is his building of a highly respected history department at the University of Nairobi that, initially, was in harmony with national politics.

Nairobi's obsession with pre-colonial tribal histories at the expense of recent developments, such as the Mau Mau War, was in harmony with Kenya's political thrust that was not interested in raising difficult questions about the structure of Kenya's economy and society. There had been debates as to whether independent Kenya should retain the nascent capitalistic outlook inherited from the departing Britons or chart a totally new course and restructure society in a more equitable manner. This meant taking a socialistic line, which at this point in time was anathema to a lot of key players in Kenya's new political dispensation. Among these was Kenyatta, the president, and Tom Mboya the minister for planning and economic development who, to silence those demanding a socialistic path, issued Session Paper Number 10 on *African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya*. In it, they made it clear that, African socialism meant the continuity of capitalistic institutions with an African twist. Mainstream academics accepted this twist since they were in league with the politicians as part of the establishment. Ogot then, was one of those establishment academics.

IV

Political orientation, therefore, shaped academic pre-occupation and this explains the position taken by Nairobi in contrast with what was going on in Dar es Salaam, however, what was going on in Dar es Salaam ended up affecting both Nairobi and Makerere. Tanzania was the first of the East African countries to attain independence in 1961, under the leadership of Julius Kabarage Nyerere, a schoolteacher. Tanzania, like Kenya, also struggled to chart a new path and its definition of African socialism was to call it *Ujamaa* which simply meant rejecting capitalism and putting an African twist to scientific socialism. Nyerere, better known as *Mwalimu*, led this struggle and set out to teach Tanzanians and the rest of the world what true African socialism was. Believing that the intellectual framework Tanzania inherited from colonialism was improper, Nyerere tried to reconceptualise Tanzania in a way that would be a negation of British institutions. What was interesting was that, unlike Kenyatta in Kenya, Nyerere in the colonial days had not acquired the reputation of an intellectual troublemaker, yet, on becoming president, he blossomed into an intellectual warrior. He was in a rare position to concretize his attacks on colonial institutions by putting his ideas into practice within a country. His ideas became the official ideology of Tanzani, and he wrote and intellectualized his political experiment, *ujamaa*, that would be

authentically African, neither Western nor Eastern¹⁸, and that rejected the *ubepari*, being practiced in Kenya.

As expected, academics at the University of Dar es Salaam fell into place and became co-crusaders against *ubepari*. While they churned out books on pre-colonial Tanzania, they started emphasizing class analysis as opposed to tribal histories. The point was not so much to prove that Africans had histories to be proud of, that was a given, but to analyze the nature of the relationships between the colonizing Europeans and the Africans. The relationship was a destructive and exploitative one with Africans deriving little good from that encounter, and therefore textbooks needed to be revised to stop praising the benevolence of the European colonizer and instead indicate the destructiveness of that encounter. In the forefront of this attack on European benevolence was Walter Rodney who claimed to have tired of pointing out to students various incorrect assertions in textbooks.

His *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* was meant to be a response to most of the distortions regarding the benefits that Africans supposedly received from European colonialism; his argument was that the European contact with Africa had led to the underdevelopment of the African continent.¹⁹ The book aroused different reactions, for instance it raised a level of disgust in Western circles and especially for those who clung to capitalistic institutions, but there was also admiration with African societies and some Westerners describing the ideas as being bold and refreshing.

V

While Rodney was held with fascination by a section of academics that had grievances against African states which claimed to be capitalistic, such as Kenya, he was anathema in those states. Among his admirers was Ngugi wa Thiong'o, whose flair for literary expression on African matters manifested themselves before independence, when he was a student at Makerere. An initial admirer of the anti-colonial Jomo Kenyatta, his language in *Weep Not Child* was a transliteration, rather than a translation, of the Gikuyu language into English. In so doing, he captured the imagination of the youth who could identify with every expression because although the words were in English, the expressions were in Gikuyu. In a

¹⁸ Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity/ Uhuru na Umoja: A Selection From Writings and Speeches, 1952-1965* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1966); ----*Freedom and Socialism/Uhuru na Ujamaa: A Selection From Writings and Speeches, 1965-67* (Dar es Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1968); ---- *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968); Colin Legum and Geoffrey Mmari, editors, *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere* (London: James Currey, 1995).

¹⁹ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington DC: Howard University Press, 1974); Macharia Munene, "Africans and Their Interpreters in International Relations," presented at the 4th Pan-European International Relations Conference, European Consortium for Political Research, University of Kent at Canterbury, September 8-10, 2001.

lot of ways, Ngugi was like Okot p'Bitek, using English words to say African things in an African way. A distaste for English ways had so imbued Ngugi that he forced the department of English, of the University of Nairobi to change its name into a department of literature because they were teaching literature in English and not simply English literature.

The radicalization of Ngugi, in which he switched from an admirer to a bitter critic of Kenyatta, could be traced to the time he started writing the "As I See It" column in the *Nation* Newspapers on the eve of independence. He could detect potential contradictions in the euphoria of the coming independence which he variously captured in his *The River Between* and in *A Grain of Wheat*. He was disillusioned with politicians cheating gullible peasants out of their money and land. His disillusionment then matured in his Gikuyu play, *Ngaahika Ndenda*, his problem was that he went to the extent of recruiting the poor to act themselves, in a play that effectively accused the Kenyatta government of betraying the Mau Mau freedom fighters. Other than staging a play, he wrote *Petals of Blood* and ended up in the detention camp only to come out with a book that was worse than all his previous writings, *Caaitani Mutharaba-ini* or *The Devil on the Cross*. The devil here was a reference to the main Western capitalist states. The devil was assisted by stooges in the name of the cabinet and other compradorial operatives, to fleece the poor in Kenya.²⁰

After his release from detention, following Kenyatta's death, Ngugi went into exile but, continued to be a thorn in the flesh to a government whose intolerance of divergent views was exemplified by President Daniel arap Moi's September 1978 assertion that all Kenyans had to do what he said and that he was answerable only to God. Subsequently, the University of Nairobi became divided between establishment academics who saw nothing wrong with the Moi regime and those who complained about interference with academic freedom and tended to empathise with Ngugi and Rodney. A new intellectual term, the *Mau Maus*, became the code of reference for government critics who continued to write in praise of the Mau Mau War and to insist that Mau Mau was a nationalist movement that had brought independence to Kenya only to be betrayed by those wielding political power. Subsequently, fixing the Mau Maus, both at academic and political levels, became a fixation with some lecturers promoting Moi and trying very hard to be in good books, which as pointed out by Casper Odegi Awuondo, in his *The Cheering Crowd*, "was aimed at keeping a safe distance from Kamiti prison."²¹

A number of intellectuals, such as 'the Mau Maus,' were unable to keep a safe distance from prison, and since they seemed to be what Moi, in his *Kenya African*

²⁰ A good analysis of Ngugi and his works is to be found in Simon Gikandi, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Among key Ngugi's writings before he went into exile, and all published by Heinemann, are *A Grain of Wheat* (1967); *The River Between* (1965); *Petals of Blood* (1977); and *Caaitani Mutharaba-ini* (1980).

²¹ Casper Odegi Awuondo, *The Cheering Crowd* (Nairobi: Basic Books, Kenya, 1997).

Nationalism: Nyayo Philosophy and Principles, called “intellectual terrorists,” they were sent for ‘re-education.’ There were also “intellectual homeguards” whose mission appeared to be to identify “the terrorists” to be reeducated.²² Among the identified ‘intellectual terrorists’ was Maina wa Kinyatti, a historian at Kenyatta University. He was noisy, attacking those who were distorting Kenya’s history by distorting the Mau Mau. He later found himself being ‘re-educated’ in prison with Willy Mutunga, a law lecturer, Mukaru Ng’ang’a, another historian, Alamin Mazrui, a linguist, and Katama Mkangi, a sociologist. Their offense, according to Mkangi, was to be “foolish enough to live by the time-honoured tradition of academic and intellectual integrity.”²³ This ‘foolishness’ transformed them into intellectual warriors and they appeared happy to talk about the education they received while in the prisons. In contrast, some of the ‘homeguards’ tended to cringe and occasionally become apologetic for their role or to lament that they have been shortchanged by the system they had served so diligently.

Keeping a safe distance from Kamiti permeated disciplines like philosophy where critical thinking is expected and produced interesting intellectual excursions that seemingly had the blessings of the establishment. Henry Odera Oruka had no desire to be reeducated and so his philosophical expeditions started gravitating towards ‘sagacity’ which, he claimed, was a branch of philosophy mostly found among the Africans. Close to oral traditions, sagacity tried to analyse the thoughts and sayings of the wise or the ‘sage’ in their African context, which he insisted was philosophy; as he pointed out that philosophy does not have to be in the form of written discourse.

Oruka identified four types of philosophical trends; ethnophilosophy, professional philosophy, Africa’s modern political and ideological thought, and African philosophic sagacity. Not impressed by ethnophilosophy, he had a lot of time for sagacity with which he was identified. What was even more, Oruka drove his point of sagacity into European homes when in 1978, during the 1978 World Congress of Philosophy Conference in Dusseldorf, Germany, he reputedly shouted that “philosophy is not a monopoly of the West.”²⁴

Although he did not want to be associated with ethnophilosophy, his sages tended to be Luo and so he acquired a reputation as an expert on Luo customs, norms, and beliefs; this expertise made him a star witness in a burial case to determine whether

²² Daniel arap Moi, *Kenya African Nationalism: Nyayo Philosophy and Principles* (Nairobi: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 126-133.

²³ Macharia Munene, *The Politics of Transition in Kenya, 1995-1998* (Nairobi: Quest and Insight, 2001), p. 10.

²⁴ H. Odera Oruka, *Practical Philosophy: In Search of An Ethical Minimum* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1997); Anke Graness and Kai Kresse, eds., *Sagacious Reasoning: Henry Odera Oruka in Memorium* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1997); D. A. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995), pp. 233-246.

a woman had the right to decide where her husband would be buried. After lengthy proceedings, the courts agreed with Oruka that Luo sagacity did not have room for women to decide on serious customary matters. Oruka had been invited to give evidence as an intellectual warrior defending Luo customs and traditions against the onslaught of Western influence, in the guise of a Gikuyu woman, Wambui Otieno, who had married a prominent Luo man, S.M. Otieno. The link with the establishment came when the then President, Moi, while castigating those who had supported the widow, hosted prominent Luo academics who seemingly supported 'African traditions.' He later appointed the lawyer who argued the case for Luo traditions, to the Court of Appeal.

It was ironic that one of Oruka's favourite sage politician, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga rejected the idea that a widow could not determine the burial place of her dead husband. For Odinga, however, such a rejection of accepted norms was not peculiar given his reputation for locking horns with all types of authority. He often tried to chart his own route that collided with the colonial government, the Kenyatta presidency and Moi's regime. It is because of this habit that, Oruka tried to elevate Odinga's political and other statements into a philosophy: a sage philosophy. Published in 1992, in the year of the multi-party election in which there was an assumption that Odinga would win, the book read like a campaign tract for a future President Odinga; the sage.²⁵ In all these, Oruka viewed himself as fighting philosophical battles in defense of what is African, against European claims. To that extent, he was an intellectual warrior.

VI

While Oruka was struggling to protect Luo customs at the intellectual level with sage philosophy, events elsewhere were demanding a different kind of response. While the West continued to be a problem, attention increasingly turned to those that the West had imposed and sustained in positions of political power. The weakness of the dependency argument, which had captured the imagination of many ordinary people in the 1970s, was that, it had become an excuse for those plundering African states to pass on the blame to the West. Realising that this is what taking place was, therefore, required not only a recasting but also intellectual focusing on the wrongs committed by African leaders. The euphoria of *uhuru* had ended and the interests of African power holders and those of the intellectuals diverged. As a result, African intellectuals did not feel the need to defend the establishment simply because it was African. The feeling was that something African should make sense on its own rather than be assumed to make sense because it was African.

²⁵ H. Odera Oruka, *Oginga Odinga: His Philosophy and Beliefs* (Nairobi: Initiative Publishers, ACTS Press, 1992).

Questioning the wrongs committed by various regimes persisted and gained momentum among Africans who insisted that, the regimes were the basic problem as opposed to an external force. They therefore applied their intellectual prowess to challenge government policies that seemingly were detrimental to the interests of the Africans in particular countries. For instance, Wangari Maathai, the environmentalist *green woman* used her intellect to frustrate the construction of a monstrous building in a public park whose purpose was seemingly to glorify Daniel arap Moi. To construct the envisioned 60 storey building with a four-storey statue of Moi, she believed, would have been an environmental disaster for Nairobi. Ever quick witted, her retort to the Kenya government and members of parliament who questioned her marital status was to advice them to use what was above the neckline rather than what was below the waistline.

There were also men who used what was above the neckline; they included clergymen and lawyers, including Henry Okullu, Timothy Njoya, Gibson Kamau Kuria and Gitobu Imanyara. Okullu started his career as editor of the Christian publication *Target*, and later published a book titled *Church and State in East Africa* which emphasized the responsibility of the Church in pointing out what was wrong in society.²⁶ He had no time for sycophantic cabinet ministers whom he dismissed as “court poets”, and was among the first to call for Kenya to return to multi-party type of politics. Closely associated with him was Timothy Njoya, a Presbyterian minister whose sermons were so intellectually stimulating and challenging that his church, St Andrews, was always filled with the elite of Nairobi, he was in the habit of making statements that rubbed government authorities the wrong way, pointing to the follies of their positions. His New Year sermon of 1990, for instance, in which he accused Nkrumah and Nyerere of importing single party systems into Africa and asserted that that there was nothing African about them changed Kenya’s political mind-frame. As a result, politicians called for his arrest and detention, later he was subjected to a beating at the hands of security offices, within a church compound. To the Moi regime, the mindsets of Okullu and Njoya were dangerous.

Lawyers also took a questioning position on the way the Kenya government treated Kenyans and administered laws. Gibson Kamau Kuria for instance, distinguished himself by representing people who were unpopular with the government and insisting that their rights be respected. He was detained only to be released after international pressure marred Moi’s 1987 visit to the United States. More importantly, he tended to publish his views on the laws challenging the government interpretation of the law and the constitution in such a way that the government was hard pressed to respond at the same intellectual level. His point appeared to be to show that the government position, even if courts enforce it, was inconsistent with

²⁶ Henry Okullu, *Church and Politics in East Africa* (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1974); see also his *Quest for Justice: An Autobiography of Bishop Henry Okullu* (Kisumu: Shalom Publishers, 1997).

common sense, natural justice, and what is universally accepted to be just. His views, therefore, were spread beyond the corridors of the courtroom.

One of the outlets for his intellectual output was the *Nairobi Law Monthly*, a creation of lawyer, Gitobu Imanyara. Imanyara first attracted attention with his defense of air-force men accused of staging a coup attempt in 1982; he spent some time in jail thereafter, was disbarred, and then started the *Nairobi Law Monthly* to provide an outlet for legal discussions. Although initially targeting the legal profession, it became acceptable in the wider Kenyan community as a vehicle for divergent opinions on the constitution, the law, and politics. It made him some kind of hero because he was perceived to be addressing issues that others were afraid to touch.

The effort to attack the shortcomings of the African state coincided with ideological shiftings in the West, which was busy re-evaluating its failures in Vietnam, Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines. This re-evaluation led the West, particularly the United States, to abandon developmentalism and to start emphasizing 'human rights' and 'democracy' as new conditions for state to state relationships. The interests of African citizens in questioning the way their governments ran the affairs of state and the long-term interests of the west coincided in such a way that they complemented each other. Thus, Wangari Maathai was able to persuade western powers not to lend money to the Kenya government because it was environmentally dangerous. The United States government pressured Moi in 1987, to account for human rights abuses in Kenya after it received information that Kamau Kuria had been detained after representing a client. Gitobu Imanyara was able to publish his *Nairobi Law Monthly* with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy, which had been set up by President Ronald Reagan.

VII

This coincidence of: the interests of African advocates of human rights and the practice of democracy; with, the interests of the west appeared to worry some academics. The tendency to emphasize the weaknesses and atrocities committed by African leaders and states, it was suggested, was an attempt to cover up the real culprits. Those who were actually responsible were the imperialists and their international instruments. The decline in the obsession with the cold war and the need for Africans to assert their non-aligned status did not mean that Africans should let their guard down. The coincidences of African intellectuals fighting against domestic repression with the change of tactics in the imperialist camp were essentially excuses to manipulate the African state. Foremost in this kind of thinking was Issa Shivji at the University of Dar es Salaam and Mahmood Mamdani of Makerere University.

Shivji, a product of Nyerere's *Ujamaa* ideology, had come into academic prominence with his 1976 *Class Struggle in Tanzania*, followed in 1986 by his *Law, State and the Working Class in Tanzania* and in 1989 he produced an attack on the promotion of human rights in his *The Concept of Human Rights in Africa*. In this book, one notes Shivji's skepticism on the new international trends in which imperialism had found new, more pleasant looking clothing that were threats to Africa.

The new form of threat to Africans, he believed, was in the form of discourses on human rights, democracy, or globalisation. These discourses, he complained, were euphemisms for controlling African states and had little to do with concern for the Africans in those states. The aim he further argues was to kill African states and since states are the basis on which people organize themselves politically and economically, their death would mean the virtue enslavement of the African people.²⁷

This belief is encapsulated in his paper "*Critical Elements of a New Democratic Consensus in Africa*," that was presented in a conference to pay tribute to Julius K. Nyerere, in the paper, Shivji noted that the discourse on democracy was both contradictory and contested terrain as he insisted that there was a new corporate state in which the north is "the new global aristocracy with the bureaucracies of the Bretton Woods Institutions acting as their mandarins. The victims are peoples of the South and Africa in particular." Shivji takes issue with Africans for accepting the "neo-liberal images and ideologies of democracy, constitutionalism, pluralism and the 'free market'" which they then "ape like parrots." The danger, he argued, was that instead of critically assessing the implication of globalisation, "our political leaders, publicists and intellectuals are mesmerized by glib talk of democracy, human rights, and a 'free' market."²⁸

In this article, Shivji shifted from attacking the enemy and seemingly turned his intellectual wrath on Africans. He is clearly angry with somebody, and that somebody is not the 'corporate state' that he dissects so well. Having been intellectually raised in the *Ujamaa* logic, which Nyerere later admitted had some mistakes; Shivji seems to gloss over the errors associated with the mentality of the *Ujamaa* state. It appears as if he is angry at fellow Tanzanian academics for pushing the state to democratize and respect human rights as well as to relax its stranglehold on the economy. Among such could be his fellow professors who analyzed the abuses in Tanzania under Chama Cha Mapinduzi in such detail that they read as if they referred to Kenya under Moi's one-party state. Law professor Chris Maina Peter, for instance, has been agitating for constitutional and legal

²⁷ Issa G. Shivji, *The Concept of Human Rights in Africa* (London: Codesria Book Series, 1988), passim.

²⁸ Issa G. Shivji, "Critical Elements of a New Democratic Consensus in Africa" in Horoub Othman, editor, *Reflections on Leadership in Africa: Forty Years After Independence* (Dar es Salaam: VUB University Press, 2000), pp. 25-38.

changes in Tanzania, and political scientist, Mwesiga Baregu is known to have lamented that Tanzanian intellectuals, unlike their Kenyan counterparts, were docile and were not participating in the liberation of their country from state oppression. Baregu then accused the intellectuals of being too conformist to want to rock the establishment boat.²⁹

In terms of repressing citizens, therefore, socialistic Tanzania and capitalistic Kenya were similar in the way both ran down the economies -and mistreated their citizens. It is possible that Shivji's anger is directed at other law professors and political scientists who are at the forefront for pushing for constitutional as well as judicial reforms in Tanzania, again, the anger may simply be due to the fact that Tanzania had deviated from *Ujamaa*.

The type of analysis that imbues Shivji, who has remained at the University of Dar es Salaam, is revealed in the anti-imperialistic writings of Mahmood Mamdani. Mamdani taught at Dar es Salaam between 1973 and 1979 and then moved over to Makerere in 1980 where he established himself as a scholar. The publication that put him on the intellectual map was *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*.³⁰ In it, he complained of the tendency by writers on Idi Amin, of profiteering through sensationalism while hiding their real motive. He believed that the writings contained "a definite message: the sensational twist hides the ideological content." In trying to uncover the ideological content, he tried to trace the roots of Idi Amin's atrocities and found them in the imperialist camp.

It was Britain that had created fascist institutions that could be used, Britain that had trained Idi Amin. Britain and Israel had also helped Idi Amin to overthrow Obote in the hope that they could control him. In essence, the Western imperialists had no right to be self-righteous given that they actually were responsible for fascism in Uganda. Imperialism and fascism therefore, went hand in hand. In an effort to restore the glory that was Makerere, Mamdani helped to establish the Centre for Basic Research in Kampala. He subsequently left Makerere and has since been moving from one university to another holding high positions and producing more books that receive more accolades. The most important of these being *Citizen and Subject* in which he claimed that colonialism left a lasting legacy in Africa of fragmented and authoritarian institutions in new states that are hard to reform.³¹

²⁹ Mwesiga Baregu, "Activism, Apathy and Conformity: Intellectuals' Responses to Political Change in East Africa," in Joseph Oloka-Onyang, Kivutha Kibwana, Chris Maina Peter, editors, *Law and the Struggle for Democracy in East Africa* (Nairobi: Claripress, 1996), pp.145-159.

³⁰ Mahmood Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983), passim.

³¹ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Colonialism* (London: James Currey, 1996), passim.

VIII

An examination of these selected African scholars from East Africa reveals some common characteristics. One common characteristic was that they all were fighting for an African place in the intellectual arena. In that effort, they have had to contend with Ogot's academic tribunal, headquartered in the West, which keeps Africans out, so that African intellectual pursuits end up being exercises in intellectual adventurism. Those who succeed, against many odds, become intellectual warriors who constantly have to redefine their battlefields. They sometimes differed in approaches but they were clear on the objective.

It is in determining the exact location of the battlefield that African intellectual warriors sometimes turn on each other. The phenomenon of African intellectuals turning on each other was not common in the colonial period because the enemy was clearly colonialism or the white man and his whiteness. In the post-colonial period, however, the issues are not so clear-cut and as a result Africans have tended to engage in intellectual civil wars. Subsequently, there has been intellectual blood flows as indicated in the "terrorist" and "homeguard" divide in Kenya, Ogot's dismissal of p'Bitek as being blasphemous and an unreliable guide to intellectual activities, and Shivji's attack on African intellectuals advocating 'democracy' and fighting for 'human rights'.

Whatever the case, four overlapping classifications in the post-colonial period can be identified. In the 1960s, academics tried to prove that Africans were as good as their Western counterparts and had outstanding achievements that the West had ignored. There was also close collaboration between the wielders of political power and the academia. The second classification was in the the 1970s, a period that was characterized by widespread attacks on the concept of European benevolence with emphasis on the destructiveness of European contacts. In the period, hostility developed between the state and some intellectuals who criticized the state. Symbolic of this distancing between state and academia was the intellectual triumvirate of Okot p'Bitek, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Walter Rodney.

The third period was the 1980s and early 1990s. In this period, there was pronounced subservience of the academia to political power holders with intellectual's becoming homeguards of the state. This forced other intellectuals to try and do what Nyerere had done, to force the state to accept their ideas on what was good for citizens; they became intellectual activists rather than theorizers. This intellectual activism against state failures coincided with global changes that favoured the intellectuals, as opposed to wielders of state powers. It was that coincidence that worried scholars such as Shivji.

The discussion so far has dealt with the first three classifications, but not the fourth, which began roughly in the mid 1990s. This is still unfolding and as it unfolds, it appears as if Africa is being subjected to what may be termed *post-modern colonialism* intellectually and materially. In the process, there is a growing

impression that the focus on the study of Africa is of a disinterested nature, simply carried out as an academic occupation rather than for particular purposes. The studies claim to be thorough and objective and as such African consumers should accept them instead of engaging in their own rigorous self-study. This impression, if real, is misleading because the issue is not whether Africa is being properly studied, represented, or presented in the various fora, but rather, the crucial point, and what is of concern, is on who is doing the study of Africa, where it is being studied, and for what purpose. Further, are Africans studying themselves? If so, do they do it in isolation or in comparison with other peoples who study themselves? In that comparison, how many resources are they devoting to the self-study and subsequent self-interpretation? The reality is that not enough Africans are studying Africa in comparison with the way Europeans and Americans study themselves before going out to study other people. The failure to study themselves, and actually permitting foreigners to study Africans more than Africans study themselves, implies that Africa has become vulnerable to intensified intellectual warfare. The challenge to future intellectual warriors is to confront this warfare at the level that it is waged; at the intellectual level which then determines policy and policy application in Africa. The implication is that Africans must venture into intellectual adventurism.

Chapter Five

The Creation of Poverty

I

Poverty is created, it is not natural, it is also relative rather than absolute. It has different levels and dimensions which end up being comparative. It brings in the notion of wealth as the possession of a certain level of material and spiritual as well as cultural commodities. The purpose of those commodities is to provide service that is deemed appropriate to a given people to make them lead what is considered decent lives. The absence of those commodities and services is what constitutes poverty because the people concerned are not able to meet their basic needs. It follows then that if people are meeting their needs: material, social, spiritual, political, and cultural, then they cannot be said to be poor. When, however, this ability is undermined, then, a process of poverty creation has started.

The view that poverty is something that comes is reflected in three different comments made by one Senegalese and some Kenyan nationals. Noting the role of capitalism in poverty creation, the Senegalese, a peasant, observed, “we know that the government wants larger and larger areas brought under irrigation because that is what the Americans and others are paying for. But this money is given for the sake of politics, not for assisting the peasant to improve All this will serve us nothing.”¹ In 1994, Kenyans interviewed in a World Bank study on poverty believed that poverty was a recent occurrence, dating the past ten to fifteen years. “Ten years ago,” said study participants from Kitui, “we were rich; you could see it in the local markets which were functioning. Today there is nothing to sell; there are no more markets” In Bomet, respondents traced their poverty to 1979 or thereabout and claimed, “Fifteen years ago, we had animals, granaries, and land. Today, the animals are gone, the granaries are empty, the land is subdivided, and our clothes are in tatters.”² On Tuesday, August 22, 2000, at the Holy Family Minor Basilica Cathedral in Nairobi, during a mass commemorating 22 years since the death of founding president, Jomo Kenyatta, and attended by President

¹ Quote in Lloyd Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis: The Causes, the Cures of Environmental Bankruptcy* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995 edition), p. 5.

² Deepa Narayan and David Nyamwaya, *A Participatory Poverty Assessment Study-Kenya, February- April 1994* (Nairobi: Report for the World Bank, June 1995), p. 6.

Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, Father Dominic Wakimani Wamugunda addressed himself to the deteriorating political and economic situation in Kenya, and using Kenyatta as the yard stick, accused Moi's government of having destroyed the country. Kenyatta, he said, had left a vibrant economy, roads were operational, farmers were getting the benefit of their sweat, there were no organised tribal killings, or a despicable parliament that swept away the list of shame.

If Kenyatta were to rise up from the grave, would he identify with cows in the streets of Nairobi, tribal clashes, impassable roads, and the list of shame?³ Moi, as far as Father Wamugunda was concerned had created poverty in Kenya.

To all these people, therefore, poverty is not a natural order; it had come within a certain specified period. The feeling was that livelihoods had been taken away and people been impoverished by international and local forces. This feeling fits well with the arguments that poverty is derived from certain activities that are man-made, for the purpose of depriving a people of rights to certain material, social, political, and even intellectual commodities that then make it difficult for them to enjoy a good life in peace. This deprivation is not accidental, it is contrived to create a client-patron relationship in which one group would dominate another and that domination cannot be felt to be effective unless the dominated group is made poor. By being made poor, people are then beholden to the rulers or the dominant class and are then easy to control. In the process, as Yusuf Bangura noted, people are denied "self-development and social independence, critical for the construction of democracy."⁴ The process of poverty creation is therefore anti-democratic; it is anti-people.

II

It follows then that the reason some people go out of their way to create poverty is political, because poverty is a controlling mechanism. This was the case with the imposition of colonialism in Africa in which, writes Alex de Waal, "conquerors often created famine"⁵ as a method of control. Those who resisted colonialism had to be made poor, further, all the resources available to colonial authorities including missionaries were deployed to impoverish the African. Since there were times when some missionaries had problems understanding what their exact role in the colonies was, colonial officials in British East Africa advised them to read a little book by Sidney Olivier, *White Capital and Coloured Labour*, which outlined

³ Excerpts of Wamugunda's sermon and President Moi's immediate reaction after the mass were printed in the *Daily Nation* of August 23, 2000 and were broadcast repeatedly in the Citizen Television, Nation Television, and KTN news bulletins on August 22 and 23, 2000.

⁴ Yusuf Bangura, "Authoritarian Rule and Democracy in Africa: A Theoretical Discourse," Peter Gibbon, Yusuf Bangura, and Arve Ofstad, eds., *Authoritarianism, Democracy and Adjustment: The Politics of Economic Reform in Africa* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1992), p. 44.

⁵ Alex de Waal, *Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 1997), p.27.

the role of missionaries as being to soften the natives for proper exploitation by white capitalists. The work of the missionaries, therefore, was to help make the African poor by depriving him of his heritage so that he can be properly controlled in order to entrench European interests.⁶

The process of entrenching European interests in Africa required more than encouraging the missionaries to help make the natives culturally poor, it also meant directly forcing Africans to a life of hand to mouth existence, as a way of ensuring compliance. According to Thomas R. Odhiambo, pre-colonial African economies were dynamic and involved different types of commerce using agricultural and other products. What colonialism did then was, to obstruct and to subject Africans to subsistence activities by blocking the avenues for independent economic activities. "The subsistence orientation we see today was never innate in the African political economy," Odhiambo and pointed out that "this latter day phenomenon of subsistence production was a response to the poor terms of livelihoods under the prevailing colonial conditions and policies"⁷ Those conditions had confined Africans to certain areas called reserves and in the process, as asserted by E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo created a peasantry "synonymous with poverty."⁸

Creating peasants synonymous with poverty was deliberate in part because African producers had out-competed the white settlers and were also unwilling to leave their productive and rewarding activities in order to work for white people, whether settlers or colonial authorities. "Colonial powers," Paul Harrison noted in his *Inside the Third World: The Anatomy of Poverty*, made the Africans "hewers of wood and drawers of water.... They wiped out indigenous industry and forced the colonies to buy their manufactures. They undermined the self-sufficiency of the Third World and transformed it into a source of raw materials for Western industries.... Sometimes they bought land or just seized it to set up plantations, drafting in cheap labour to work them."⁹ The method of drafting cheap labour involved inventing special taxes meant for Africans only and occasional military expeditions which resulted in the destruction and confiscation of native property in order to drum sense into the heads of the recalcitrant Africans. Drumming sense sometimes involved burning down of villages, confiscating livestock, public whipping of the

⁶ Macharia Munene, "Intercultural Conflict: The Fight Over Female Circumcision, 1914-1932" *MILA* Vol 1 1996 pp 73-88.

⁷ Thomas R. Odhiambo, "Positioning African Agriculture for Food for the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century," *The African Journal of Food and Nutritional Security*, Volume 1, Number 1, 2001, p. 5.

⁸ E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo, "The Rise and Decline of the Kenya Peasant, 1888-1922," printed in Peter Gudkind and Peter Waterman, *African Social Studies: A Radical Reader* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), pp. 233-240.

⁹ Paul Harrison, *Inside the Third World: The Anatomy of Poverty*, Third Edition (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 45.

natives or decapitating the hands and limbs of certain people to serve as as examples to the rest of the villiagers to accept the new colonial order.¹⁰

Creating poverty therefore, was a controlling mechanism; with colonialism entrenched, poverty as a controlling mechanism became a tool to be employed against those who dared to challenge colonial rule. A good example of this kind of thinking is associated with the Mau Mau War, as the war intensified with no end in sight; the official colonial policy became one of isolating the Kikuyu and making them poor while rewarding collaborating tribes. The Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, Maconochie-Welwood is on record as insisting that development projects be concentrated amongst the “loyal tribes” who Community Development minister, B.A.Ohanga stated were to be found in Nyanza and among the Nandi speaking groups. The Nyanza spokesperson, Mr. I. Okwiry, then in the LegCo, wanted to make the Kikuyu poor by forcing them to pay extra taxes, and kicking Eliud Mathu out of the LegCo simply because he was Kikuyu, thereby withholding “the progress, and development, of the Kikuyu tribe.” Okwiry’s view were echoed by Micheal Blundell who wanted only members of the loyal tribes appointed to the LegCo and by Chief Secretary, Richard Turnbull, who imposed a “general disability” on the the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru with regard to participation “in African political life at present.” Only proven loyalists were to be exempted from “this general disability.”¹¹ The message was, deprive the troublemakers of all ther rights and then control would be easy.

III

Eventually, political colonialism in Africa came to an end, this brought up anxieties as well as high expectations both outside and within the African countries. Anxiety and high expectations helped to shape the subsequent events in Africa that essentially created more poverty for Africans, despite independence. African independence, wrote Gwendolyn M. Carter in 1962, “was the culmination of a major movement in human history” in which “the last great area of colonial control ... came under local ... leaders.”¹² This apparent loss of political control created anxiety among the Westerners who worried about what African independence would connote for the old order. Independence then, was portrayed as an invasion that threatened the white world and might even lead to the break-up of such

¹⁰ de Waal, *Famine Crimes*, p. 27; Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons, eds., *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), passim; Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1999), passim.

¹¹ Macharia Munene, “Colonial Origins of Kikuyu Bashing,” Seminar on Media and Conflict in Africa, United States International University-Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, December 20, 1996.

¹² Gwendolen M. Carter, “Introduction” in Gwendolen M. Carter, editor, *African One -Party States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 1.

institutions as the British Commonwealth of Nations.¹³ If African independence was an invasion into the existing white world order, a strategy was needed to render that invasion ineffective. Therefore, making the Africans poorer at independence than they were, during colonial times, was the applied strategy.

The West did not have to start from scratch in designing a mechanism for fighting the African invasion into the world order, the colonial boundaries that they had imposed arbitrarily had forced different peoples into one, in the service of colonialism, and at the same time, emphasised differences when it came to Africans fighting for their rights. As the time for independence drew near, it was these differences that the colonialists stressed so as to make governance difficult for the new leaders. They deliberately imposed artificial structures that they knew would not work well. "More serious than anything else," notes Harrison "the elites they handed over power to, were products of the colonial education system and were schooled in western ways. Instead of pursuing indigenous models of development, almost all of them set out to construct imitation western societies."¹⁴ In the process, they squandered wealth in what A.H.M. Kirk-Greene hilariously termed, building "a British-style public school, an Eton in the bush," or constructing a basilica in the bush, or crowning one self, emperor.¹⁵

In squandering the wealth local and thereby creating more poverty for the people, these rulers were encouraged and abetted by Western governments and institutions under the guise of guided development. Development, especially during the Cold War, meant pumping money to autocratic regimes which professed some sort of anti-communism. Irrespective of how atrocious and destructive a ruler was to his country and people, such a person had to be maintained through developmentalism because it was within Western interest.¹⁶ One of the tools of this development was the state creations, called parastatals, which, in later years, became poverty creating organs. Through parastatals, with great ability to redirect tax money taken from rural people into private pockets, public wealth and resources were siphoned and thus poverty in the respective countries intensified.¹⁷ As the parastatals siphoned state resources to benefit a favoured few and create mass poverty in various

¹³ Macharia Munene, "Africans and their Interpreters in International Relations," paper presented at the 4th European International Relations Conference, European Consortium for Political Research, University of Kent at Canterbury, England, September 8-10, 2001.

¹⁴ Harrison, *Inside the Third World*, p.46.

¹⁵ A.H.M Kirk-Greene, "His Eternity, His Eccentricity, or His Exemplarity? A Further Contribution to the study of H.E. the African Head of State," *African Affairs*, Volume 90 Number 359, April 1991, p.171.

¹⁶ Macharia Munene, "Cold War Disillusionment and Africa," in Macharia Munene, Korwa Adar, and J. Olewe Nyunya, editors, *The United States and Africa: From Independence to the End of the Cold War* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995), pp. 26-27.

¹⁷ Roger Tangri, *Politics of Patronage in Africa: Parastatals, Privatization, and Private Enterprise* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

African countries, they helped to create a new poverty-driven industry that is the international aid institutions or NGO's.

International aid to Africa comes in many guises, one of these is in the form of the lucrative occupation of advising Africans, most such advice can be construed as the wrong advice, it has helped to create even more poverty. "Aid," argued Alex de Waal "is a textbook example of a self-justifying activity and a paradigmatic case of how the best intentions can produce the most disastrous results."¹⁸ While one accepts that aid is a self-justifying activity, it is questionable whether it is a paradigm of the best intentions going wrong for that would assume that the advisers were ignorant. It is more likely that the intentions were never right with regard to Africa, indeed, advising Africa has become a major industry, wrote Lloyd Timberlake in his *Africa in Crisis: The Causes, the Cures of Environmental Bankruptcy*, "with European and North American consulting firms charging as much as \$180,000 for a year of an expert's time. At any one point, sub-Saharan Africa has at least 80,000 expatriates working for public agencies under official aid programmes. More than half of the \$7-8 billion spent yearly by donors goes to finance these people. Yet in two and a half decades of independence, Africa has plunged from food self-sufficiency to widespread hunger" partly because of the "ill-advise" it received from Western experts¹⁹. Since these experts are not necessarily ignorant, their ill advise was not accidental, it was deliberate, to create more poverty for Africans for having dared to challenge the white world order.

Creating and intensifying poverty in Africa can thus be viewed as part of a white racist agenda designed to keep blacks down. Experts are mostly whites from North America and Western Europe, with a token of local natives, especially groomed, to give the expected advice, with a self-appointed mission to decide what is good for Africa materially, politically, and even intellectually.²⁰ It gives some people a sense of thrill and a feeling of being better than these blacks who can then can be advised into perpetual ignorance and poverty. "Living in a world of wealth," according to George Gilder in his *Wealth and Poverty*, "the upper classes of American society have long listened straight-faced and unboggled to the most fantastic tales from the world of the poor ... It helped that many of the poor were black. They looked different; perhaps they were different."²¹ To ensure that Africans remain different, poverty-stricken, and dependent on the white power structure, are the experts who provide ill advise. They comprise what Graham Hancock, in his *Lords of Poverty*,

¹⁸ Alex de Waal, "Democratizing the Aid Encounter in Africa," *International Affairs*, Volume 73 Number 4, October 1997, p. 623.

¹⁹ Lloyd Timberlake, *Africa in Crisis: The Causes, the Cures of Environmental Bankruptcy* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995 edition), p.3.

²⁰ See arguments in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crisis* (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 1997); Munene, "Africans and their interpreters".

²¹ George Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. 64.

termed a rotten “aristocracy of mercy” that thrives in enriching multi-nationals from the donor countries, and themselves, in the name of helping the poor.²²

Donor country multi-nationals are particularly effective in creating poverty in the Third World with Africa getting a sizeable share of that creation. The tragedy is that they do that with the full knowledge and support of the governments of the states whose people are being made poor. It is those governments that evict people from their land in order to make land available to the multinationals; they use tax money to provide services to multinationals that, they would not dream of providing, for their own people. David C. Korten in his *When Corporations Rule the World* argues that in the name of promoting economic growth “devastation is often heavily supported by public subsidies.” What is additionally disturbing is that “infrastructure costs associated” with the setting up of multinational corporations “are commonly funded by loans disbursed under ... foreign aid programs to be repaid by the host country from public funds.”²³

Usually, the people making the decisions on how public funds would be spent are in a conspiracy, and with the multi-nationals, condone the devastation of state resources as long as they make private gain. In the wastage of natural resources, William Ascher noted in his *Why Governments Waste Natural Resources*, political strategies tend to prevail. Political strategies “increase the likelihood that resources will be squandered to benefit small groups of powerful people, reduce the visibility of resource-depleting maneuvers, and worsen the infighting among government agencies that shape resource policies and practices.”²⁴ Those political strategies that help to create and intensify poverty are supported by the international community, including their institutions.

IV

To argue that the international community is involved in creating poverty in Africa does not excuse African governments and their leaders, indeed, there was, at the time of independence, high expectation that governments led by Africans would not deliberately impoverish their people. One of Kenya’s slogans at independence, for instance, was the eradication of three related evils namely; disease, ignorance, and poverty. It was the same in other newly independent African states as people expected that opportunities hitherto denied them would be opened up, and indeed, some were. What the colonial experience demonstrates, however, was that poverty creation was political and those who were groomed by the colonial authorities to take power had learnt that lesson very well. It was, therefore, this political nature of

²² Graham Hancock, *Lords of Poverty* (London: Macmillan, 1989), passim.

²³ David C. Korten, *When the Corporations Rule the World*, Second edition (San Francisco: Kumarian Press, 2001), pp. 48-50.

²⁴ William Ascher, *Why Governments Waste Natural Resources: Policy Failures in Developing Countries* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p.245.

poverty creation that the African post-colonial rulers inherited and generally embraced despite the rhetoric on eradicating poverty. They also inherited a state-machinery for making people poor, that machinery was bureaucratic and could be manipulated to serve the interests of the ruling class.²⁵ The new rulers learnt that the bureaucracy could be used to serve political ends and to deprive certain segments of the society services that they are entitled to by virtue of being citizens.

By depriving people of the needed services, African governments thus imitated their colonial predecessors. One may agree with Amartya Sen that poverty is “a capability failure” or the “failure of the basic capacity to reach certain acceptable levels.”²⁶ However, the main concern is not so much on the capability failure itself but on how that failure came about. When it is deliberately induced by strong forces such as the government and the international community, that inducement is poverty creation. In the process, the desire and willingness of a people to convert resources into wealth in terms of goods and services is obstructed by these forces. The choice to act or not to act for the improvement of society is thwarted by the political forces that want to deny freedom to citizens, the creation of poverty therefore implies a denial of freedom to the citizens.

Taking away the freedoms of the people to be innovative, to invest, to improve their lifestyles, and to participate fully in the governance of their countries are some of the ways in which African governments have made Africans poor. They have created poverty, partly because they had learnt well from the colonialists not to trust their own people and as such to go out of their way to destroy anyone who might appear to be doing well. While hankering to attract foreign investors or multi-nationals, African governments went out of their way to discourage domestic capital accumulation and investment because, according to Thandika Mkandawire, “of the political unease African leaders felt about the emergence of a nationalist capitalist class and ... genuine doubts that such a class could assume the leading role of industrialisation.”

What was more, Mkandawire continued, “the authoritarian thrust of African politics... sought to block the emergence of alternative sources of political power.”²⁷ Not trusting, and afraid of the citizens, African governments appeared to enter into a destructive spree. Productive areas in terms of coffee, tea, cotton, cocoa, sugar, and vegetable oil were systematically destroyed which made the people even poorer. Control mechanisms through the colonial type bureaucracy ensured that efforts to convert resources into wealth were thwarted through

²⁵ Bruce J. Berman, “Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism,” *African Affairs: The Journal of the Royal African Society*, Volume 97 Number 388, July 1998, pp. 313-329.

²⁶ Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1992), p. 109.

²⁷ Thandika Mkandawire, “Developmental States and Small Enterprises,” in Kenneth King and Simon McGrath, editors, *Enterprise in Africa: Between Poverty and Growth* (London: Intermediate Technology Press, 1999), pp. 45-46.

requirements including special permits and licences which then became a new form of fleecing the public; corruption in obtaining permits became the norm. Michael Mattingly argues that the bribery fees demanded of citizens and the time lost in the process before they can be allowed to improve their lives, makes wealth creation difficult.²⁸

Out of desperation, sometimes, African governments have created poverty by mounting wars on their own citizens, in the hope that they can stave off popular demands for change. The violence is generated in the form of clan clashes, ethnic clashes, cattle raids across the borders or as in the case of Sudan, a full blown civil war. Whatever the terminology, the end result has been the creation of more poverty for African, and as they create poverty, the leaders have no compunction in sending out requests, begging the international community to intervene with Aid which only creates more poverty.

Poverty creation is therefore a contrived process that has long historical roots, as a contrived process, it is deliberate and manipulated by some people in political power for the purposes of favouring or victimising a person or particular group of people. Those who believed that they are victimised become resentful believing that their perceived poverty is due to those in authority. Some of them nurture a feeling of betrayal, which in Kenya is well captured by Bethwell A. Ogot's "Siege of Ramogi: From National Coalitions to Ethnic Coalitions,"²⁹ which epitomises the belief that poverty was a creation of politics.

²⁸ Michael Mattingly, "The Role of the Government of Urban Areas in the Creation of Poverty," in Sue Jones and Nici Nelson, editors *Urban Poverty in Africa: From Understanding to Alleviation* (London:Intermediate Technology Press, 1999), pp.17-21.

²⁹ Bethwell A. Ogot, "The Siege of Ramogi: From National Coalitions to Ethnic Coalitions, 1960-1998," as reprinted in Bethwell A. Ogot, *Building on the Indigenous: Selected Essays 1981-1998* (Kisumu, Kenya, Anyange Press, 1999), 277-288.

Chapter Six

The Colonial Origins of Central Kenya Bashing

Probably one of the most politically popular activities in the last twenty years in Kenya is, bashing the people of Central Kenya or Mount Kenya. Participants include politicians, media, and academics in Kenya and abroad. It has become the norm for a variety of people to attract media attention simply by lashing at the Gikuyu or “Kukes” and in the process the anti-Gikuyu campaign was so successful that some Gikuyu joined in the bashing to prove they were different from other “Kukes”. This success in bashing, however, tended to produce a reaction of defiance based on a belief that people were victimized simply because they were Gikuyu. The bashing and the defiance started in the colonial days and created a climate in which discussions on everything in Kenya tended, and tends, to rotate on what to do about the Gikuyu as a people.

European colonial rule in Africa lasted roughly 80 years and left many legacies, one of which was their vengeful determination to continue controlling the colonies even after they relinquished official political power. They devised ways of ensuring that the new African countries would have structures that would continue to need the presence of former colonial masters, and that the governments would inherit a people divided along ethnic lines. They were clever in, so argued Anver Versi of *African Business*, placing “African figureheads ... in charge of complex social, political and ethnic entities that were little more than hand-picked ‘agents’ of the old colonial masters, more interested in furthering the interests of their former rulers than the welfare of the people.”¹ To ensure that people remained divided, they had emphasised tribal differences, suspicions and the hatred of particular communities. In Kenya, for instance, the British ensured other tribes would regard the Gikuyu with suspicion and hatred.

The British anti-Gikuyu hate campaign succeeded in planting deep seated resentment that frequently manifests itself in academia, in politics, and even in international dealings. On the eve of independence, however, this colonial desire was temporarily thwarted by the feeling of national unity that led to “the Mau Mau Chiefs,” Jomo Kenyatta and Mbiyu Koinange, assuming the leadership of

¹ Anver Versi, “Editorial: Democracy is a State of Mind,” *African Business*, May 2005, p. 11.

independent Kenya. Thereafter, the feeling was repeatedly revived to undermine achievements by the Gikuyu through pseudo-scholarship orchestrated by the former colonisers who found their way into influential policy making positions in governments and universities where they became “experts” on Kenya and Africa. Subsequently, these experts helped to determine the thinking of various Western governments and institutions towards Kenya. Those colonialists, who ended up as experts at the universities, were the ones who trained Africans in the art of intellectual Gikuyu bashing and to internalise the British obsession with undermining “the Mau Mau tainted Kikuyu” in anything and everything that they do.

With that kind of orchestration, it is not surprising that foreigners from Europe or North America appear to be obsessed with the “Kukes” and how to fix them. In part, this obsession explains the current Western hostility towards the Kibaki regime because he is a “Kuke”, a political disciple of Kenyatta the Mau Mau Chief, and is probably tainted with the Mau Mau brush because a relative of his fought in the Mau Mau War. Some of his ministers have even shown some enthusiasm towards Mau Mau fighters and would not mind, occasionally, singing a few Mau Mau songs in public, and they probably are responsible for the seemingly defiant “cheeky” stand that Kenya has taken towards dictates coming from the Western powers that are very similar to the ones that the colonial governors used to issue. The West, therefore, is essentially re-fighting the Mau Mau War in different arenas and through a variety of guises, masquerading as concern for Kenyans.

The roots of colonial Gikuyu bashing, 1900-1957

The view that the Gikuyu were, and probably still are at the international level, “cheeky” is as old as the establishment of colonialism itself. In 1978, former colonial official Richard Frost seemingly endorsed Colonel Meinertzhagen’s observations that while the Kikuyu “would be the most progressive under European leadership”, they were also “the most susceptible to subversive activities”.² Colonial apologist, Elspeth Huxley, believed that the Kikuyu were secretly cheeky, wrote political scientist Gideon Cyrus Mutiso, while Luos were lazy, the Kambas sex maniacs, and Somali and Maasai were trustworthy.³ Because of this cheekiness, those in power, whether within Kenya or internationally, or associated with power have thought it necessary to engage in Kikuyu bashing as a way of fixing the “Kukes”. The current international bashing, orchestrated by the British, is part of that old colonial belief in dealing with “the Mau Maus.” British colonialists, and

² Richard Frost, *Race Against Time: Human Relations and Politics in Kenya Before Independence* (Nairobi: Transafrica Book Distributors, 1978), p. 135; Colonel R. Meinertzhagen, *Africa Diary, 1902-1906*.

³ Gideon Cyrus Mutiso, *Kenya: Politics, Policy and Society* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1975), p. 47.

colonial apologists, were the first to engage in the art of Gikuyu bashing, they did it so well that those who later engaged in that activity simply proved that they were very good students of their colonial masters.

In the colonial times, the Kikuyu gave the government a good political excuse to bash them. These excuses ranged from the activities of Harry Thuku in the early 1920s to those of KCA in the 1930s, the political adventures of Jomo Kenyatta and Mbiyu Koinange, and the outbreak of Mau Mau War in 1952. The Mau Mau War was the best excuse the British had for bashing the Kikuyu and they did it with relish. In the process, they set up examples of how to bash the Kikuyu, which their post-colonial disciples mastered well.

The Mau Mau War created what Oliver Lyttelton, the British colonial secretary, called “a new and unexpected convulsion” that “now shook Kenya,”⁴ and took longer than expected. Failure to defeat the Mau Mau fighters quickly, despite the superior weaponry available to the British, forced the government to adjust its thinking with regard to governance in Kenya. The British, having been forced out of India and the Middle East, had planned to make Kenya the center of their empire and were therefore shocked by the Mau Mau.

Britain chose to deal with the convulsion by adopting policies that aimed at suppressing any expression of sympathy or support for the nationalists, a quick military victory, the isolation and punishment of the Kikuyu as a people, and political concessions to loyal tribes. The government tried to suppress any information or the holding of views that might contradict what it proclaimed to be the truth. To Lyttelton, the truth was that Kenyatta was “a daemonic figure with extreme left-wing views” who made Lyttelton, while writing instructions to Governor Evelyn Baring, “suddenly see a shadow fall across the page - the horned shadow of the Devil himself.”⁵

Steps were taken to deal with those who sympathized or might sympathise with the devil. These included banning KAU in June 1953; it had mobilized an international legal defense team for Kenyatta.⁶ Peter Evans, a British lawyer who, apart from assisting in Kenyatta’s defense, presented a report to the governor about the killing of two Kikuyu prisoners by the security forces, was declared a prohibited immigrant in Kenya and Tanganyika and was actually detained at Fort Jesus, Mombasa. In Kampala, *Uganda Post* Editor, Joseph William Kiwanuka, was charged with sedition because of an article that questioned Thacker’s credentials to

⁴ Oliver Lyttelton, Viscount Chandos, *the Memoirs of Lord Chandos* (London: The Bodley Head, 1962), p. 393.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 394-395.

⁶ John Spencer, *KAU: The Kenya African Union* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 250-255.

be a judge in Kenyatta's trial.⁷ A London based magazine, *Africa and the Colonial World*, was banned in Kenya because it revealed the atrocities being committed by the security forces.⁸ A white schoolmaster who, according to Lyttelton, had "attended Kenyatta's meetings, and ... evinced considerable sympathy in public with Mau Mau," was declared a prohibited immigrant and kicked out of Kenya.⁹ Reverend George M. Houser, a founder member of the American Committee on Africa, was in 1954 denied a visa to Kenya because he had participated in anti-racist campaigns in the United States and was likely to be critical of government policies. He was declared "a prohibited immigrant" in East Africa.¹⁰

This control of opinion was expected to enable the British to attain a quick military victory against the Mau Mau but they were disappointed. It was the failure to win quickly that led Churchill, on March 6, 1953, to suggest that helicopters be used. Churchill "stressed the importance ... of making a display of air power over the heads of the Mau Mau. The more often they saw an aircraft overhead, the more they would feel that all their movements were under observation."¹¹ This was wishful thinking on Churchill's part since the colonial state were already using helicopters and other types of aircraft and still there was no victory in sight as 1953 dragged into 1954.

Colonel E.W.Grogan humorously explained that the reason the air bombing was not effective was that the African was tricking the government by lighting a fire in one section of the forest and then moving to another part where he could watch the British drop bombs "while the Kikuyu is sitting half a mile away peacefully having his supper."¹²

More of the British troops were called into service and disputes as to how the war should be conducted began to creep in on the government side. This led to the firing of General George Erskin and the resignation of Colonel Arthur Young as Kenya's Chief of police in 1955, because, the government was covering up

⁷ John B. George, Letter to American Universities Field Staff Offices, New York, "Over the Hump with the Mau Mau", Institute of World Affairs Newsletter No. JBG-44, June 15, 1953. Letter posted in Arusha, Tanganyika. Found in the African Studies Center Library, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts; Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963), p. 29; Peter Evans, *Law and Disorder or Scenes of Life in Kenya* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1956), pp. 183-255.

⁸ *Africa and the Colonial World*, September 1953, pp. 2-4; January 1954, pp. 2, 4-6, 10; February 1954, pp. 1-2; April 1954, pp. 1-2, 4-5, 8.

⁹ Chandos, *Memoirs*, p. 403.

¹⁰ George M. Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain: Glimpses of Africa's Liberation Struggle* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1989), pp. 21-22; *Africa Today*, August-September 1954, p. 2.

¹¹ Quote in Martin Gilbert, *'Never Despair': Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965* (London: Stoddart, 1988), p. 803.

¹² E.W. Grogan, Contribution to the "Budget Debate", May 20th, 1954, *The Legislative Council Debates: Official Report Volume LX and LXI, Third Session*, 21st April, 1954 to 4th June, 1954, pp. 221-222.

atrocities committed by its home guards.¹³ Eventually, however, the colonial state did get its military victory especially after the capture of Dedan Kimathi in 1956 but by then the earlier British optimism had dissipated.

Despite the enforced conformity and cover-up of brutality, there had been no quick military victory and so the British had been forced to rethink their governance of Kenya. Colonial Secretary Lyttelton flew to Kenya three times between 1952 and 1954 and concluded that the white settlers could no longer expect to rule without the participation of blacks, therefore, a formula for incorporating some Africans had to be found.¹⁴ This meant reversing the position that Governor Evelyn Baring had taken in April 1953 stating that self-government for Africans, as in the Gold Coast, was out of the question.¹⁵ The results of the rethinking, Baring stated in the Legislative Council in 1954, was the Lyttelton constitution mandating a multi-racial government as well as the decision to “initiate a study ... of the best methods of choosing African members of the Legislative Council.” Walter F. Coutts, the Administrator of St. Vincent in the Windward Islands, was appointed to conduct the study¹⁶ and he submitted his report in 1956.

At the same time, a policy of isolating and punishing the Kikuyu for their role in the Mau Mau was adopted. While discussing the emergency progress, in 1954, the Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, Maconochie-Welwood, insisted that development projects would be concentrated amongst the “loyal tribes”¹⁷ which the then Minister for Community Development, B.A. Ohanga, stated included those in Nyanza and the Nandi speaking groups.¹⁸ Nominated Nyanza spokesperson, I. Okwirry, in May 1954, stated that the Kikuyu should be made to pay more tax than that paid by the loyal tribes, further, that because Mathu was a Kikuyu, he should not be in the Legislative Council.¹⁹

Okwirry later called on the government to “withhold the progress, and development, of the Kikuyu tribe.”²⁰ And in February 1956, while moving the second reading of the Bill on African representation, better known as the Coutts’ Report, Chief Secretary Richard Turnbull emphasized: “There can be no question of all Kikuyu, Embu and Meru being allowed to take full part in African political

¹³ *Africa Today*, March-April 1955, p. 3-4; *Africa and the Colonial World*, October, 1955, p. 2; Kenya-time for Action!, “Pamphlet issued in 1955 by The Church Missionary Society, London. Copy in the African Studies Center Library, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.

¹⁴ Chandos, *Memoirs*, pp. 397-399, 403-404.

¹⁵ Alzada Comstock, “British Africa”, *Current History*, July 1953, p. 25.

¹⁶ Governor's Speech from the Chair, October 12, 1954, in *Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Legislative Council Debates, Tenth Council, Fourth Session, First Sitting*, pp.6-7.

¹⁷ Minister Maconochie-Welwood's remarks, October 20, 1954, in *Ibid.* p. 255.

¹⁸ Minister B.A. Ohanga's remarks, October 21, 1954, in *Ibid.* p. 345.

¹⁹ Okwirry's remarks, May 29, 1954, *Ibid.* Tenth Council, Third Session, Third Sitting, pp. 227-230.

²⁰ Okwirry's remarks, October 21, 1954, *Ibid.* Tenth Council, Fourth Session, First Sitting, p. 323.

life at present.” Only proven loyalists were to be exempt from “this general disability.”²¹

While punishing the Kikuyu, the government worried about other tribes being infected by what it considered to be the Mau Mau disease. Canon F.C. Bewes of the C.M.S. warned that Mau Mau was not confined to the Kikuyu and quoted a Muganda telling him that other tribes in Uganda, Tanganyika and Sudan “are watching the issue” and that “the real problem is a world-wide one, not just Kikuyu”.²² The government took such views seriously and feared that the Mau Mau influence would spread, according to Colin Legum, to “other important tribes like the Luo, the Baluhya and the Kipsigis in the Nyanza province”.²³ The possible spread of “the Mau Mau infection” to the Kamba was particularly worrying because, reported Douglas Brown of the *Daily Telegraph*, the Kamba formed “the backbone of the regular army and police force in Kenya It is now admitted that authorities have been worried about the moral health of the Kamba for the past nine months”.²⁴

To restore the moral health of the Kamba, and other tribes, it had been necessary to clamp down on potential suspects and to reward loyal tribes. The War Council Report of October 1954 revealed how the loyal tribes had been materially rewarded. For instance, the Kamba of Machakos were given a farm of 16,000 acres for resettlement while, the Machakos District Council received a loan to develop the sisal industry. Kitui District received a “special grant of £10,000 for improvement of water supplies in recognition of the loyalty of the 230,000 Kamba in the district”. Nyanza tribes were given loans “to finance and encourage trade”. Assistance was also given to the intermediate boys’ school in Baringo District, while the government school farm in Elgeyo Marakwet was extended.²⁵ Other tribes, like the Kipsigis received special commendation from Deputy Governor Frederick Crawford “for their valuable assistance to the government” by contributing 15,000 men to the security forces, in the fight against the Mau Mau.²⁶

The Maasai elite were given a monthly newspaper called *Ilomon Le Maasai* or *Maasai News* founded early in 1955. The government *Kenya Newsletter* described *Maasai News* as “a journal of tribal news and tidings of the war against Mau Mau

²¹ Chief Secretary, moving the Bill on “African Representation”, February 24th, 1956, *Ibid.*, Tenth Council, Fifth Session, Second Meeting, pp. 199-204.

²² *Africa Digest*, February - March 1953, Issue No. 7, p. 7.

²³ Colin Legum, *The Observer*, March 15, 1953, as reproduced in *Africa Digest*, April-May 1953, Issue No. 8, p. 15.

²⁴ Douglas Brown, *Daily Telegraph*, May 14, 1954 as reproduced in *Africa Digest*, May 1954, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 8.

²⁵ “The War Council Report” of October 20, 1954 as reproduced in *Africa Digest*, December 1954, Vol. II, No. 6, pp. 10-11.

²⁶ *The Times*, February 1955, as reproduced in *Africa Digest* March-April, 1955, Vol. II, No. 8, p. 18.

terrorism in Central Kenya, in which the pure Maasai had steadfastly stood by the Government.” These “pure Maasai” the *Kenya Newsletter* asserted were an “aristocratic” and “proud race” that did not want to mix with other communities and were “content” to live “exactly as their forefathers lived centuries before the coming of the European to Kenya”. It was only for the purposes of enabling “the tribe ... to retain its fast-vanishing prestige” that the Maasai elite wanted “to catch up with the white man’s ways”.²⁷ Such views, drummed into the heads of the Maasai elites about tribal purity, nobility, and steadfastness against Mau Mau from Central Kenya, had their long term effect.

The government took all those measures in order to isolate the Kikuyu and the effect of that policy can be observed from the treatment meted out to Eliud Mathu, the longest serving African in the Legislative Council. Wycliffe Awori, who suspected Kikuyu KAU members of organising Mau Mau, intimated to a *Manchester Guardian* correspondent that he did not accept Mathu’s leadership and that the government paid too much attention to Mathu.²⁸ Awori’s attack was later reinforced by Okwirry, who demonstrated that Mathu was not acceptable as an African leader. Mathu, according to Grogan, was both Jekyll and Hyde and because he was a Kikuyu, he could not be trusted.²⁹ Though loyal to the government, Mathu was a Kikuyu and was automatically disqualified from consideration.³⁰ Lyttelton recommended the appointment of an African minister for community development and B.A.Ohanga, a Luo, was appointed in April 1954. The government, in February 1956, declared the Meru to be a loyal tribe, exempted from the restrictions imposed on the Kikuyu. When the elections were held in March 1957, therefore, Mathu lost to Bernard Mate, a Meru tribesman who had the active support of the colonial state.³¹

As the anti-Mathu campaigns indicated, the policy was not simply to punish the Kikuyu, but rather, it was also to promote and encourage members of “loyal tribes” to take up African leadership. “The Kenya Government’s policy,” according to a 1954 government analysis, “is to assist the emergence of responsible African leaders.” Among the Kikuyu, those encouraged would be “home guard leaders.”³²

²⁷ *Kenya Newsletter*, February 23, 1955 as reproduced in *Africa Digest*, March-April, 1955, Volume II, No. 8, p. 19.

²⁸ *The Manchester Guardian*, June 8, 1953, as reproduced in *Africa Digest*, June-July, 1953, Issue No. 9, p.15.

²⁹ Grogan Contribution on “Non-European Membership on Emergency Committees”, 26th February, 1954, *Kenya Legislative Council Debates: Official, Tenth Council, Third Session, Second Sitting*, p. 356.

³⁰ Roelker, *Mathu of Kenya*, pp. 107, 112-113, 121-126, 130-133; George Bennett, *Kenya: A Political History, The Colonial Period* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 137.

³¹ Roelker, *Mathu of Kenya*, p. 132, 134-143.

³² Voice of Kenya Statement, “Kenya Government Policy: Official Analysis of Action taken by the Kenya Government on the Parliamentary Delegation's Report (1954)” *East Africa & Rhodesia*,

Political concessions were then to be given to such leaders. Blundell's prescription was to reward the Kalenjins and the Kamba tribesmen who had loyally helped the government to suppress Mau Mau by having some loyalists among them appointed to the Legislative Council.³³

A number of people from different loyal tribes were marked for grooming to act as alternative African leaders to Jomo Kenyatta. Kenyatta, claimed the *Manchester Guardian* on learning of Kenyatta's conviction, had misused "his immense ability and force of personality". Had he allied "with the ruling powers ... his qualities might have immortalised him in African history".³⁴ Since Kenyatta was slated to be a non-person in African history, it was necessary for the colonial state to create new leaders.

One of the leaders who came into the picture, Tom Mboya, was a Luo trade unionist. He was tailor made for the British interests in finding a substitute to Kenyatta's leadership among non-Kikuyu Africans. His trade union activities were closely watched and encouraged by James Bury, who became Mboya's advisor on trade unionism; they shared an office in Nairobi. Beginning 1954, Bury organized for Mboya to attend ICFTU conferences in Mozambique, India, and Geneva. When the dockworkers went on strike in Mombasa in 1955, Mboya and Bury collaborated on securing a pay raise of 33 percent for the dockworkers. Mboya was given a lot of publicity as a labor mediator. Bury left Kenya in 1955 and wrote that Mboya was rare among Africans and that he could fit into any trade union office in the world.³⁵

Subsequently, the government and the British Trade Unions sponsored Mboya to Oxford University. He came into contact with Dame Margery Perham, the leading advocate for identifying and grooming potential African leaders, who became his tutor and political sponsor to members of the Africa Bureau in London. Having concluded that Mathu, her former protege, had some Mau Mau connection,³⁶ she adopted and promoted Mboya as the African spokesman on Kenyan issues. She advised him to write a pamphlet on Kenya and then arranged for the Fabian Colonial Bureau to publish *The Kenya Question: An African Answer*.³⁷ In her forward, to the pamphlet, she pointed out that Mboya was "not a Kikuyu" and

March 17th 1955. Copy found in the African Studies Library, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.

³³ Sir Michael Blundell, *So Rough a Wind: The Kenya Memoirs of Sir Michael Blundell* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 214.

³⁴ *The Manchester Guardian*, April 9, 1953, as reproduced in *Africa Digest*, April-May 1953, Issue 8, p. 15.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p.17.

³⁶ Roelker, *Mathu of Kenya*, p. 112.

³⁷ Mboya, *Freedom and After*, pp. 50-51; David Goldsworthy, *Mboya: The Man Kenya Wanted to Forget* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1982), pp. 57-60.

praised him for having “a clear head and a quiet restrained manner.”³⁸ According to Perham, Mboya was the new, young and educated leader that Kenyan Africans “desperately” needed.³⁹

Through Perham, the Africa Bureau invited Mboya to be the African spokesman in a conference, on the crisis in Kenya, held in May, 1956. It is interesting that little attention was paid to two KAU officials then visiting England; Mbiyu Koinange and Joseph Murumbi, who were considered to be pro-Mau Mau agitators. Liberal minded Britons who had previously given Koinange hearings had begun to shun him for being a Mau Mau suspect.⁴⁰ Again, the publication of Koinange’s book, *The People of Kenya Speak for Themselves*, in which he defended Mau Mau leader Dedan Kimathi as being more reasonable than the government⁴¹ did not help his standing among the British. Koinange and Murumbi were reduced to watching Mboya hobnob with power brokers in a conference on Kenya as a key speaker while they made their limited remarks as members of the audience.⁴² Subsequently, Kennett Love of *The New York Times* asserted in his report from London that Mboya “had become the chief spokesman of Kenyan Africans.”⁴³

Mboya was brought to the attention of the American Committee on Africa by Michael Scott of the Africa Bureau. He had asked Scott for help in getting to America and Scott then contacted George Houser, ACOA’s executive secretary.⁴⁴ First, *Africa Today* published an article by Mboya on trade unionism in Kenya in the March-April 1956 issue which gave him exposure in the American liberal and labor union circles.⁴⁵ Houser then arranged for Mboya to visit the United States in August 1956 and widely publicised *The Kenya Question* which became a best-seller. *The New York Times* described him as a soft-spoken smiling man, who brought to the American people “a message for African freedom and democracy.”⁴⁶ Compared to Kenyatta and Koinange, Mboya was politically clean and had the support of influential British citizens. To Houser, Mboya was to be promoted and defended as “basically a product of the democratic upsurge in Africa today.”⁴⁷ He returned to Kenya having established himself as an African spokesman to the

³⁸ Mergery Perham, “Foreword”, in Tom Mboya, *The Kenya Question: An African Answer* (London: Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1956), pp. 1-2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁰ Drake, “Mbiyu Koinange”, p. 191.

⁴¹ Koinange, *The People of Kenya*, pp. 72-75.

⁴² The Africa Bureau, London, “Report of the Conference on Questions affecting Kenya and Britain”, 12th May, 1956 in the Livingstone Hall, London. Document in the African Studies Library, Boston University.

⁴³ Kennett Love, “Labor Chief Warns British of Violence Over Policies of White-Domination”, *The New York Times*, May 13, 1956, p. 26.

⁴⁴ Houser, *No-One*, p. 81.

⁴⁵ Tom Mboya, “Kenyan Trade Unions Fight for Freedom,” *Africa Today*, March-April 1956, pp. 2-5.

⁴⁶ *The New York Times*, August 19, 1956, p. 9.

⁴⁷ George M. Houser, Letter to the Editor on “Mboya’s Politics”, *The New York Times*, May 11, 1958.

American people and, according to Smith Hempstone, a journalist who later became the ambassador of the United States to Kenya, with a lot of money from the AFL-CIO.⁴⁸

Evidence that the colonial state was relenting, presented itself in the March 1957 elections for African representatives. Although they had been designed to keep out the Kikuyu and disqualify 'extremists', the outcome was a disappointment to the colonial state in that most of the candidates viewed as government endorsed, lost.⁴⁹

The eight elected Africans created the African Elected Members Organization (AEMO), and immediately refused to cooperate with the government, and demanded parity with the Europeans. The government acceded to the demands for more African representation and a special election for six more Africans was called in 1958 so as to raise the number of Africans to fourteen. Among the new elected members of the Legislative Council was Julius Gikonyo Kiano, the first Kikuyu to be elected and who was subsequently dubbed "the acknowledged political leader of the largest and most energetic tribe" and a potential prime minister.⁵⁰ Kiano, the first Kenyan to obtain a Ph.D., was the first harambee student.

With the blessings of the banned KCA and the Koinange family which the colonial state considered subversive, donations for Kiano's travel to the United States in 1948 had partly come from the Kenya African Union and mostly from elders who wanted "the son of Jonathan Kiano" to study.⁵¹ In his 1958 election platform against his old teacher at Alliance, Mathu, Kiano emphasised: "it must be kept in mind that Kenya is bound to be governed by the majority of its inhabitants—the Africans."⁵² He joined Odinga and Mboya as the most articulate critics of the colonial state.

The government had hoped that with the rise of people such as Mboya, Odinga, and Kiano, Kenyatta would be completely forgotten. This did not happen because in June, 1958, in the Legislative Council, Oginga Odinga, insisted that Jomo Kenyatta and his fellow prisoners at Lokitaungs were the true leaders of the Africans. October 20th, the anniversary of Kenyatta's arrest was, in 1959, turned into a national holiday as 5,000 Africans boycotted public transport, refrained from smoking and drinking, and marched in Nairobi's streets chanting Kenyatta's praises

⁴⁸ Smith Hempstone, newsletter to Walter S. Rogers, SH 26, June 26, 1957, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Gikonyo Kiano, "Victory for Democracy, Elections in Kenya", *Africa Today*, Vol. 4, No. 3, May-June 1957, pp. 3-6; Richard P. Hunt, "Kenya May Face Political Strife", *The New York Times*, Sunday, March 17, 1957.

⁵⁰ Edwin S. Munger, "Kenya: Kikuyu Village Hall Democracy," American Universities Field Staff: Reports from Foreign Countries, East African Series, Vol. V, No. 3, 1959 (New York: AUFS, ESM-9-'59), p. 8.

⁵¹ Remarks made during Kiano's 70th birthday celebrations at Kiano's residence; sporadic discussions with Kiano at different times; discussions with Mwangi Karangu in Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

⁵² *The East African Standard*, March 3, 1958.

and demanding that he be released.⁵³ This exercise in self-denial, on ‘Kenyatta Day’, was repeated in 1960⁵⁴ and thus started what in Kenya would eventually become a public holiday.

New colonial strategies to fix the Gikuyu

Between 1957 and 1961, therefore, it became clear that Africans would rule Kenya. Those elected in 1957, were supposed to be pliant African leaders but they refused to cooperate and demanded more representation. Due to persistent pressure from the Africans, Britain agreed to a constitutional conference in January 1960 with the lifting of the State of Emergency on January 12, 1960. What was even more galling to the settlers, colonial officials, and their academic rationalizers was the presence of Mbiyu Koinange at the Lancaster House Conference; to these people, Koinange was second only to Kenyatta in terms of responsibility for Mau Mau and his acceptance was therefore a defeat for British officialdom, it was also proof that Kenyatta could not be stopped from assuming leadership.

It is in the context of the events of 1957 to 1961 that the settlers, the colonial state, and colonial academics devised new strategies that were both political and academic and which would have a lasting impact on independent Kenya. On the political front, the colonial state continued to reward members of the loyal tribes with lucrative appointments. One such loyal tribesman was Daniel arap Moi, a man who professed not to have a mind of his own and therefore appeared to be safe.⁵⁵ Knowing how to play safe and please those in power, Moi had been appointed to the colonial Legislative Council (LegCo) in 1955 where he praised British colonialism. In February 1956, he said: “When I look back at the history of the African district councils, I cannot but recognise how much more Africans owe to her Majesty’s Government – administrators who have done so much in the darkest years – days when Africans were in the dark, and now have come to see the light.”⁵⁶ By giving the impression that he did not have a mind of his own and that he would do what the British wanted, Moi achieved what a later British High Commissioner to Kenya, Sir Edward Clay, called a “valuable and civilized relationship” with the British.⁵⁷

⁵³ Leonard Ingalls, “Police Break Up Rally in Nairobi”, *New York Times*, October 21, 1959; *Kenya Weekly News* October 23, 1959, p. 9, and October 30, 1959, p. 9.

⁵⁴ *The New York Times*, October 21, 1960; John W. Richards, “The Enigma of Jomo Kenyatta”, *The New Leader*, December 26, 1960, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁵ For Moi’s claim that he did not have a mind of his own, see Sheila Rule, “No Tune Like His Own Tune, Kenyan Tells Nation”, *New York Times*, November 7, 1984.

⁵⁶ Daniel arap Moi, Contribution to debate on ... the motion on “Appointment of Africa as President of North Nyanza African District Council,” Crown and Protectorate of Kenya, *Legislative Council Debates, Tenth Council, Fifth Session, Second Meeting, February 1956*, pp. 97-98.

⁵⁷ See Clay Interview with Nation TV’s Louis Otieno, in *Sunday Nation*, June 29, 2003.

Another loyal tribe's man was William Ole Ntimama, a member of the Maasai elite which the *Kenya Newsletter* had referred to. First appointed in 1954, to the Narok African District Council as a Councilor, he impressed the colonial state enough for it to appoint him the clerk to the council in 1958 and then to the Kenya Legislative Council in 1959. He left the LegCo in 1960 to join the growing ranks of African Colonial District Officers. At the LegCo, Ntimama wanted the government to help restore the Maasai's pre-colonial status as the "ruthless rulers of some parts of Kenya and East Africa" by assisting them with "good cattle management and in agriculture."⁵⁸ He was also not interested in tribal integration because the Maasai were "ultra-conservative", and did not see the benefit of the "present thing called 'civilization'", and although he considered the Kikuyu and Kamba as friends, the Maasai "still feel a bit tribal", he insisted that "there is a bit of tribal smell, I think you agree, Mr. Speaker."⁵⁹ The speaker at the time was Ferdinand Cavendish Bentick who quit his position as speaker of the Legco in 1960, because at the Lancaster House Conference, the British Government had committed itself to African majority rule.

After the Lancaster House Conference, Africans came together and created one national party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), and they chose the jailed Kenyatta as their party leader. The colonial state refused to accept Kenyatta's name and so the leaders, picked James Gichuru to be the acting president Oginga Odinga, as vice-president, Tom Mboya as secretary-general, Ronald Ngala as treasurer, Arthur Ochwanda as deputy secretary-general, and Daniel Arap Moi as assistant treasurer, in a compromise arrangement of positions.

This seeming African unity scared the settlers who then blamed the Kikuyu and the Luo for their political predicament and thus devised a way to keep Africans separate. Led by Micheal Blundell and Wilfred Havelock, the settlers reconstituted themselves into a small white tribe. They then approached the perceived leaders of "small tribes", and convinced them not to be part of KANU; together they then formed the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) whose *raison d'être* was fear of the Kikuyu and the Luo. It was a strange fear given that restrictions on the Kikuyu had been lifted barely five months before but to paraphrase Ntimama, KADU leaders felt "a bit tribal" and had "a bit of tribal smell". The KADU leaders' feeling of "tribal" and ability to have "a bit of tribal smell" became so entrenched, particularly after Kenyatta's release in 1961, that few other tribes wanted to be associated with them in new regional groupings.

In 1962, the government created a boundaries commission that toured the colony supposedly asking different communities which region they wanted to be placed in.

⁵⁸ William Ole Ntimama's Maiden Speech on Education, 19th May, 1959, *Kenya Legislative Council Debates, Official Report 11959, Third Session, 21 April - 22 May 1959*, pp. 959-991.

⁵⁹ Ntimama statement on "Outlying Districts (Amendments), 16th December 1959, *Kenya Legislative Council Debates, Official Report 1959/60 Fourth Session, 10th November 1959 -7th 1960*, pp. 969-970.

The recorded answers were invariably against the Kikuyu and the Luo. The Embu and the Meru, although Kikuyu kinsmen, refused to continue being in the same region with the Kikuyu. The Kamba had been cured of any Kikuyu affinity and so they wanted nothing to do with the Kikuyu. In Western Kenya, the Luo were political pariahs and so those Luhyas who testified refused to be associated with the Luos. As a result of this colonial fact-finding, based on colonial conditioning, to isolate the Kikuyu and the Luo, the present provincial boundaries were created.

Yet, despite all the effort by the colonial state, the settlers, and their KADU surrogates to emphasise the “tribal smell” in national politics, the African voter behaved differently when he/she was in the privacy of the voting booth. In the 1961 and 1963 elections for instance, voters across the colony ignored tribal feelings and picked national unity preached by KANU against KADU’s emphasis on “tribal smell”. In the process, they made Kenyatta their first prime minister and president to the chagrin of the settlers and colonial apologists who had hoped to create a non-Kikuyu African leader as an alternative to Kenyatta.

The second strategy that the colonial apologists adopted was to mount an intellectual war against Mau Mau, the Kikuyu, and Kenyatta. Some colonial officials ended in British and American universities as experts on African, and particularly Kenyan, affairs. Others returned to universities to acquire higher degrees which then supposedly gave them academic credentials to write Kenya’s history. There were even those who did not bother with higher education and yet felt competent to claim authority on East African and African history. Some of the books that these colonial officials and defenders wrote, though full of distortions, were used in Kenyan schools as texts on the history of Kenya. For instance, those who attended secondary schools between 1958 and 1967 were exposed to two history books. These were first *An Introduction to the History of East Africa* by Z.A. Marsh and G. Kingsnorth and *A History of Africa* by W.E.F. Ward who also wrote *Emergent Africa*. Marsh and Kingsnorth, taught Kenyan pupils that Mau Mau delayed independence and that forced villagization enabled the government to provide “piped water ... which could not be provided for in isolated land-holdings”.⁶⁰ The interesting thing is that those who were forced into villagization did not see any pipes or any water in any village.

W.E.F. Ward was more scornful of Mau Mau, and his distortions were more glaring. “It would be misleading to describe the Mau Mau men as ‘freedom fighters’”, he asserted in *Emergent Africa*, “The Mau Mau was ... merely revulsion from modern ways back to tribal traditions We can only suppose its leaders were hoping to gain absolute power in Kenya.... Whoever its leaders were, they did not succeed. They created an atmosphere of terror, but they were defeated because the mass of their fellow Kikuyu refused to submit.” Conveniently, Ward ignored

⁶⁰ Z.A. Marsh and G. Kingsnorth, *Introduction to the History of East Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957 and 1965 1st edition p. 196 and 3rd edition p. 186.

the mass detentions, air bombings, harrassments and assorted terror methods adopted by the colonial state, when he asserted that “Mau Mau did not hasten independence, but rather, delayed it”.⁶¹

Ward’s distortions then went into high gear. The Kikuyu, in his view, craved for villagization as “Kikuyu men brought their wives and families out of their scattered homes into stockaded villages and formed an efficient home guard to defend them”. The home guards did become efficient in their repressive activities to please the colonial state; those forced into villages, however, were not happy about it. Ward claimed that Kenyatta succeeded Harry Thuku as the head of Kikuyu Central Association whose name Kenyatta supposedly changed to “Kenya African National Union”. Ward concluded his history by asserting that on the eve of independence party politics in Kenya was “a struggle between the Kikuyu and the rest” through KANU whose strength “was mainly among the Kikuyu and their allies”.⁶²

After being conditioned by Marsh and Kingsnorth and Ward to despise Mau Mau and the Kikuyu, some of these students moved into universities where lecturers reinforced the same views. At the universities, a point which Marsh and Kingsnorth emphasised in their 1965 edition that Britain had an independence time table for Kenya was stressed. John Middleton was involved in the Oxford University project on the History of East Africa to be read at universities and to act as reference material. Middleton’s contribution in Volume II was on “Kenya: Changes in African Life, 1912-1945”, and was published in 1965. In it, Middleton termed Kenyatta’s *Facing Mount Kenya* as pseudo-scientific mythology that tried to blame Europeans for Africa’s miseries. As far as he was concerned, Kenyatta was historically inaccurate in portraying harmonious relations between the Kikuyu and the Maasai since the two communities were supposedly enemies and had nothing in common.⁶³

Middleton was particularly adept at emphasising tribal animosities against the Kikuyu to his readers. The reason that Mau Mau did not “spread beyond the borders of Kikuyu”, he emphasised, was because by 1945 “all the other tribes were against the Kikuyu”. He concluded his observations with a reference to “insidious appeal to tribal loyalties”, as he asked: “if the White Highlands were to be opened up, how would they be distributed? They had never been Kikuyu territory, so why should the Kikuyu enter them?”

Any organisation with members from many tribes had to have leaders, but from which tribes should they be drawn?” Through his contribution to this official Oxford history of Kenya, Middleton went on to teach African students that

⁶¹ W.E.F. Ward, *Emergent Africa*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1967), pp. 156-157.

⁶² Ibid, p.159.

⁶³ John Middleton, “Kenya: Changes in African Life, 1912-1945”, in Vincent Harlow, E.M. Chilver, Alison Smith, editors, *History of East Africa*, Volume II (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 391.

Kenyatta was a “tribalist” who “had become the nationalist – inevitably, he had to become one if he were to be more than a petty local politician”.⁶⁴

Middleton was representative of the frustrated colonial apologists who found outlets in academia where they could refight by indoctrinating African students to regurgitate colonialist jargons. Some of those students who went through the likes of Middleton at Makerere, Nairobi, London, Oxford, or Cambridge matured and became lecturers and the elite. In the 1980s and 1990s, they proved they had been properly drilled in the history of Kenya according to Marsh and Kingsnorth and Ward and Middleton. They did this by engaging in Kikuyu bashing using language that would do British and settler colonial apologists proud.

Colonial Gikuyu bashing before independence, therefore, was political and intellectual. Politically, it was to scare other tribes to be suspicious, to despise, and to hate the Gikuyu. KADU was a political consequence of this scare strategy. Intellectually, it was to indoctrinate school children with historical distortions and thereby plant perpetual anti-Gikuyu dislike in independent Kenya. Some of those children and youth became university professors and school teachers and thereby helped to perpetuate the British version of events in Kenya. Using the two strategies, the colonialists were remarkably successful.

Responding to colonial Gikuyu bashing

The response to Kikuyu bashing took many forms. At times the Gikuyu tended to be accommodative and willing to behave like “envelops” when ordered to. At other times they appeared to be intransigent and defiant of the odds against them. They would adopt a collective dare devil attitude toward the perceived enemy irrespective of how strong he appeared to be. This defiance tended to deligitimize those in authority who were perceived to be bashing or joining in the bashing of the Kikuyu. This attitude of deligitimisation of those with power, like Kikuyu bashing itself, runs deep into Kenya’s colonial history and has nothing to do with a particular regime, local or international. It is simply a rejection of perceived oppression and illogical demands.

Early defiance to colonial rule can be observed from the conflict between William Purkiss and Waiyaki wa Hinga. In 1892, Purkiss deported Waiyaki to the Coast but the tale told is that Purkiss buried Waiyaki alive- head downwards- at Kibwezi. This story made the colonial masters appear particularly sinister and transformed Waiyaki into a legend of Kikuyu resistance and intransigence. To the Kikuyu, the British could not be trusted; after all, Waiyaki’s big mistake is that he had trusted a white man, Lugard, only to be betrayed by Lugard’s follower, Purkiss. The lesson was, do not trust a *white man*. This defiant intransigent is then seen through the activities of Harry Thuku who had the audacity not only to try uniting African

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.392.

communities in East Africa but also to try to link up with Africans in the diaspora such as Marcus Garvey. In 1921, Thuku toured the colony countering Governor Sir Edward Northey's assertions; Thuku's crowds were bigger and more attentive than those of the governor. Unhappy with Thuku as a unifying force for Africans rather than being merely a 'cheeky' Kikuyu, the government exiled him in 1922 and destroyed his movement.⁶⁵

In its place, it created Local Native Councils as tribal outlets for native grievances, rather than, the colony-wide African organizations. The tactic backfired in the sense that there arose the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), even cheekier in its presumption than Thuku had been. It not only sent delegates to England, but its activities led to the dismissal of Rev. John Arthur from the colonial Executive Council as a representative of African interests.⁶⁶ It was the KCA position, as propounded by its delegate in England, Jomo Kenyatta, that only Africans could properly represent Africans. Kenyatta also complained about Africans being ruled and taxed without representation.

Even more distasteful to the colonial state and its intellectual supporters, who loved interpreting the African for the African and themselves, was Kenyatta's 1938 book, *Facing Mount Kenya*. Apart from analysing Kikuyu lifestyle, the book was a political attack on the colonial state and the philosophy of colonial benevolence. The book and KCA were banned when the Second World War broke out.

The view that only Africans could speak for Africans linked Kenyatta to another political adventurer, Peter Mbiyu Koinange. Son of colonial Chief Koinange wa Mbiyu, Koinange had quit Alliance High School to attend schools and colleges in the United States and after ten years had returned to Kenya in 1938 with degrees, certificates and diplomas from Ohio Wesleyan, Columbia, Cambridge and London. He had founded Githunguri Teachers College whose undeclared aim was to educate people politically while training teachers for independent schools. His objective was to prepare Africans for the independence that, in 1948 he was sure was coming.⁶⁷

The colonial state considered Koinange subversive and was not amused by his campaign to have an African, presumably himself, represent African interests in the Legislative Council (Legco). When the colonial state eventually relented, it snubbed Koinange and picked his old classmate at Alliance, Eliud Mathu. Mathu had been properly groomed to be an African spokesman having gone to the right schools and colleges such as Alliance, Fort Hare, and Oxford. He had even

⁶⁵ G. Macharia Munene, "Intercultural Conflict: The Fight Over Female Circumcision, 1914-1932", *Mila: A Journal of the Institute of African Studies*, Vol. 1, 1996, p. 78.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-83.

⁶⁷ St. Clair Drake, "Mbiyu Koinange and the Pan-African Movement", in Robert A. Hill, editor, *Pan-African Biography* (Los Angeles, African Studies Center, University of California, 1987), pp. 182-183.

accepted to teach at Alliance at a lower pay than that paid to the white teachers. While Mathu was picked partly because he was proof that an African could be as “civilized” as a white-man, he became a political inspiration to Africans who regarded him as the black governor. His appointment also inspired the formation of a new political party, the Kenya African Union which remained elitist until Jomo Kenyatta returned and assumed its presidency. Mathu, the official representative of African interests, became a willing political subordinate to Kenyatta.

Under Kenyatta, KAU expanded politically. Membership across the colony increased with intensifying militancy. The government believed that KAU officials were responsible for violent attacks on its supporters. This view was emphasised by information given to colonial officials by some KAU officers, such as Wycliffe Awori. For instance, in 1953, Awori told Richard Frost that most Kikuyu KAU “members of the committee were professing a desire for inter-racial co-operation in committee meetings while organising Mau Mau outside”.⁶⁸ The government got its chance to lock up Kenyatta and KAU leaders in 1952 with the declaration of the state of emergency.

It had been hoped that the arrest of Kenyatta and other leaders would lower the political temperatures but what followed was open defiance as more people took to the forests and engaged the government in violent confrontations that lasted roughly four years. Many were arrested and sent to detention camps where effort was made to force them to denounce Kenyatta and Koinange, while a considerable number did as ordered; there remained that defiant core who despite beatings and torture insisted that Kenyatta and Koinange were good. It was this breed of defiant people who ended up at Hola where, it is alleged prison guards killed eleven prisoners; this act was discovered embarrassing the colonial government. The defiant ones, whether in the forests or in detention camps, took pride in asserting that they would not surrender or give in before achieving their goal of attaining independence and land. They even had songs and prayers of defiance, some of which read as follows:

Defiance

Tutiuragia kunyitwo (We do not mind arrests), Kana guciirithio, (Or trials), Kana gutwarwo icigirira, (Or being sent to islands), Ningi tutigatiga (And we shall never stop), Gutetera wiyathi, (Agitating for freedom), Kenya nii bururi wa andu airu, (Kenya is the land of black people).

Prayers

Ngai Munene (Great God)

Mutongoria wa Ita (Leader of Forces)

Mwamukiiri Magongona (Who Receives the Sacrifices)

⁶⁸ Frost, *Race against Time*, p. 152.

Ma Andu Airu (Of Black People)

Ngai Uri Mbeere (God, When You Are In the Lead)

Tutungihotwo ni Thuu (We Cannot be Defeated by the Enemy)

Mwene Nyaga (O God)

Twakuhoya (We Pray to You).

In the colonial days, therefore, the Gikuyu response to the bashing was a mixed bag. There were times of accepting and trusting those who seemed to be in authority. When those in authority violated this trust with their excessive abuse of office and brutality, the Gikuyu tended to resist. In turn, this led to organising and adopting an attitude of defiance for repressive authority, sometimes, that attitude turned violent. This defiance was supplemented by a great amount of faith in the rightness of their position, the wrongness of the oppressors, and ultimate success. This faith was reflected in the prayers that God would not let them down.

Responding to Gikuyu bashing in post-colonial Kenya

Uhuru came in 1963, but not in the way that some people had expected. Many people, who had shied away from agitating for independence, had been rewarded by the colonial state, acquiring power and additional wealth. The rest had issues with understanding the new Kenyatta who told them *hakuna cha bure* and that they had to sweat for whatever they wanted in independent Kenya. Although they appreciated the fact that, unlike the colonial government, Kenyatta did not put obstacles to their advancement, they would have preferred more material support similar to what the sons of colonial chiefs were seemingly receiving.

While there were those who, despite Kenyatta's admonition, were unable to lift themselves up from poverty by hard work, there were also many who literally adopted the implied free enterprise spirit and pushed it to its limit. They settled in different parts of Kenya and created wealth; they went outside Kenya and became farmers, traders, and professionals of all types. By the time of Kenyatta's death, these free spirits had become economically independent of the government or any other institution and were therefore unwilling to conform to what they believed was injurious to their economic interests. In general, a spirit of live and let live appeared to mark the feelings while Kenyatta was alive. The same feeling continued in the early years of Moi's rule but when the economy began to decline and government intrusiveness in the economic activities of individual's set in, a feeling of resentment started creeping in. A belief, rightly or wrongly, developed that the government targeted Kikuyu businesses and economic activities for destruction; this was economic Kikuyu bashing. With the payment to coffee and tea farmers seemingly being delayed frequently while farmers incurred heavy input costs, the logical response was to stop producing cash crops. This was because cash crops were making people debt-ridden and therefore incapable of meeting their basic costs. The alternative was to concentrate on food crops which could be eaten

and stored for future use, which, cash crops could not: the declining production of cash crops had a negative impact on the national economy because the expected national income derived from the export of cash crops was reduced.

Other than looking for alternatives to cash crop production, the Kikuyu appear to have resigned themselves to the economic bashing. A few people complained but in the 1980s, they were dismissed as tribalists and disgruntled elements. Such was the fate of cabinet minister Maina Wanjigi when, the Nairobi City Commission, under the guidance of Fred Gumo demolished slum dwellings at Muoroto and the minister had the temerity to complain about the cruel treatment of his constituents. He was accused of tribalism and dismissed from the cabinet, all he could do was to lament that he had been called a tribalist as he disappeared from the political scene and lay low; but he was not alone in lying low.

The *mlolongo* elections of 1988 completely changed the way people reacted to political developments; they became politically defiant. The crudity of the *mlolongo* riggings had been so apparent that the government appeared ridiculous; some ministers were also victims of the rigging. For instance, there was Njenga Karume in Kiambaa who, according to Kiambu DC Victor Musoga, lost the nomination to a little known coffee picker. Confused, the coffee picker denied he had won only to change his mind when advised by the DC that it was not wise to deny his victory. Shortly, thereafter, the Kiambu DC was promoted to PC with his headquarters in Nyeri. There was also Mwai Kibaki, then the vice-president and the MP for Othaya, who came out fighting when he noticed he was about to be rigged out. Rigging, Kibaki asserted required intelligence. Kibaki survived the election but was dropped from his position as vice president of Kenya. Similarly there was the saga of Kenneth Matiba, then a close ally of Kibaki, who claimed he was rigged out in the KANU elections, he virtually repeated Kibaki's phrase that rigging required intelligence, and then resigned from the government in a huff. As was the norm in the 1980s, Matiba was kicked out of KANU and a by-election was called in Kiharu where rigging was so blatant that defiance of the government became open.

A group of people was charged with making false utterances but when the government decided to drop the case, they insisted on being tried so that they could prove the truth of their assertions. Political defiance to Moi's rule took root among the Kikuyu after the *mlolongo* riggings and helped to build up the momentum for multi-partyism. With the coming of multi-partyism, the defiance was translated to mean anti-KANU votes in three elections, 1992, 1997 and 2002. It implied rejecting all those perceived to be involved in, or to condone, Kikuyu bashing and that meant KANU and the government. While, just as in the colonial days, there were segments in the Kikuyu community who collaborated with the supposed Kikuyu bashers, most of the Kikuyu people appear to have taken a collective decision to reject those they considered their tormentors. This would explain the rejection of KANU in the 1992, 1997 and 2002 elections. Those who refused to go with this collective consensus ended up looking like traitors of their communities.

Essentially, the Kikuyu appear, in the last twenty years, to have adopted an attitude that they would not succumb to any more Kikuyu bashing.

This attitude, seemingly promoted a defiant Kikuyu self-pride, it was evident in many other ways, particularly cultural ones. Musicians who analysed the political situation in Kenya and pointed out that they had no choice in being born Kikuyu appeared to capture imagination. Occasionally, one would hear phrases of old Mau Mau songs such as: “*Ungiurio! Kana! wi Mugikuyu? Ndoya Mooko meri na iguru, Njuge ndi Mugikuyu*” (If asked whether you are Kikuyu? I would lift up both of my hands and say I am a Mugikuyu). A sense of pride in being Kikuyu in a supposed time of adversity was on the way up and created a kind of socio-political comfort in being communally defiant against perceived state repression. Rising politicians could be heard saying they would not apologise for being Kikuyu or be embarrassed by the fact that they were Kikuyu.

This sense of fighting back and being proud of one’s Kikuyuness could also be perceived through the popularity of Kikuyu plays staged across the country to full houses. Whether it was Anne Wanjugu with her *Ciagana ni Ciagana*, a play about family planning, or Wahome Mutahi’s *Mugathe Ndotono*, a political play, there was excitement in the fact that messages were being received in a language that made the Kikuyu proud at a time that their bashers would want them to keep quiet or behave like envelopes. It explains the popularity of such Kikuyu publications as *Inooro* and *Mwihoko* which appeared to address the grievances of the Kikuyu and was understandable to anyone who could read the Kikuyu language.

Such resurgence of Kikuyu cultural nationalism is responsible for the popularity of three Kikuyu language FM stations. It started with Rose Kimotho whose business sense was so sharp that she probably was among the first to notice the huge market of Kikuyu nationalists waiting to be satisfied through a reliable Kikuyu radio station. She was right because her Kameme FM, *Kayu ka Muingi* became so much identified with Kikuyu nationalism that Moi threatened to close it.

The Kikuyu reaction to the threat was best captured by ACK Bishop Peter Njenga of Mount Kenya South Diocese when he asked “*Kayu ka Muingi Kamwiika atia?*” Somehow, Kameme survived, made some technical adjustments and most important it seemingly forced the government to open a competing Kikuyu radio station, *Coro FM*.

S.K. Macharia came in with his Citizen Radio, which, in 2002, ensured that the correct electoral results were announced which in turn meant the defeat of KANU. Macharia’s *Inooro FM* radio station now appears to dominate the airwaves and there is a lot of Kikuyu pride in its various programs and occasionally one would hear a politically loaded phrase, “*twaari-okuo, na turi-okuo*” The three FM stations, *Kameme*, *Coro*, and *Inooro*, all have captivating presenters who appear to take their assignments seriously. This sense of Kikuyu pride has been tested in the last two and half years in terms of a resurgence of Kikuyu bashing coming from

two different sides that when combined, appear to be awesome. Before 2002, it was common to hear that there will not be another Kikuyu president, meaning that Kibaki should forget getting elected. Moi disorganised the anti-Kikuyu vote by imposing Uhuru on KANU and the ensuing anti-Uhuru anger was transformed into support for a more credible Kikuyu, Kibaki, but that did not necessarily mean the acceptance of Kibaki as president. This was particularly evident in some of those who, three months before the 2002 elections, had been cabinet ministers in Moi's regime and still found themselves appointed ministers by Kibaki. They manifested this inherent refusal to accept the Kibaki presidency right from the beginning when they started making disparaging public, and private, remarks about the government that they supposedly served.

What was more, and in sharp contrast to the overwhelming support the media gave to the incoming Moi regime in 1978, the local media appeared to be on a vendetta to bring down the regime and seemingly went out of their way to distort stories to make Kibaki look weak and unacceptable.⁶⁹ The domestic hostility tallied well with a well orchestrated international hostility to the new regime mainly because it wanted to break from its condition of over-dependency and to reserve the right to make its own decision as to what was in the best interests of Kenya. This desire to make independent decisions collided with the perceptions of the master states, the United States and the United Kingdom, on how a client state like Kenya should behave. To them, Kenya, as a client state, was supposed to take and accept orders from them even when they are wrong. The British High Commissioner to Kenya was blunt in his statements that the Kibaki regime had no choice but to do what the British and America wanted, this kind of bluntness was repeated by the American ambassador, sometimes in a strident voice.

But, one might ask what the Westerners wanted, that Kibaki failed to go along with, which united domestic and international hostility towards the Kibaki regime. It would appear that they expected Kibaki to behave towards them as Moi had done: they wanted to make decisions on what was in Kenya's interests and therefore what Kenya should do and whom to trade with and associate.

They wanted Kenya to support the invasion of Iraq, to pass laws that restrict freedoms of Kenyans, to exempt Americans from international laws, to continue favouring British companies and institutions in procurement and other economic activities, and generally to accept British and American "advise" on everything, even when, the "advise" did not make sense.⁷⁰ Accepting all these

⁶⁹ Daniel Branch and Nic Cheeseman, "Briefing: Using Opinion Polls to Evaluate Kenyan Politics, March 2004-January 2005," *African Affairs*, April 2005, pp.332-335.

⁷⁰ Jean Kamau, "Let's Do Not As Donors Say, But as They Did in The Past," *The Sunday Standard*, April 3, 2005; Wanjohi Kabukuru, "'Kenya: Sir Edward's Crusade Has Clay Feet,'" *New African*, May 2005, pp. 32-34; David Musila, "US Must Stop Piling Pressure on Kenya," *Daily Nation*, opinion page, May 11, 2005; Fred Oluoch, "Will Kenyan MPs Bow to US Pressure or People's Will?" *The East African*, July 4-10, 2005; Macharia Munene,

would have meant negating Kenya's independence and sovereignty and because it refused to go along, it had to be punished. Part of the punishment was funding and encouraging Kenyans "with the courage to stand up", as one ambassador put it, to agitate against the Kibaki government and probably create an environment for "regime change."⁷¹ It is not a coincidence therefore that, that within three weeks, there appeared to be an upsurge of, as a *Daily Nation* editorial noted, "presumably well funded civil society"⁷² who found "the courage to stand up" in carefully orchestrated events, and playing up to television cameras, as they tried to provoke the Kibaki regime. There was the spectacle of one of the protest organisers unsuccessfully begging the police to shoot him, indeed, he was touted a globetrotting "experienced hand at mass protests ... a professional protester," wrote Oscar Obonyo in the *Sunday Nation*.⁷³

Conclusion

It is possible to explain some of the heated Kikuyu bashing activities witnessed in recent years by looking at the colonial background of those who engaged in it. These were people who were old enough to be conditioned by the colonial state's anti-Kikuyu campaigns of the 1950s to despise and fear the Kikuyu and in turn they have inculcated the same to their students who then regurgitate the same colonial diatribes in the name of scholarship. They tend to be most vocal in drumming up the concept of the "tribal smell" and they happen to be, and continue to be, the ones in positions of power and influence for which, some of them were groomed. The idea of punishing disloyal tribes by taxing them more while denying them the benefits of economic development, therefore, is not new.

Similarly, the notion of rewarding loyal tribes with government largesse can be traced to the 1950s, as a way of ensuring that tribes other than the Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru, were not attracted to what was considered the Mau Mau infection.

The political power elite are supplemented by their academic counterparts who use their pens to regurgitate what colonial academics and commentators wrote. They were high school and college students in the late 1950s and early 1960s when African history meant emphasizing colonial benevolence in Africa. It also meant

"Expectations and Disappointments in Africa-US Relations," Revised Obafame Awolowo University AAU Staff Exchange Fellowship Lecture, July 7, 2005; Ile Ife, Nigeria.

⁷¹ William M. Bellamy, "Kenyans Must Step Up Fight Against Graft," *Daily Nation*, Opinion page, July 5, 2005; Odhiambo Orlale, "US Envoy Hits Out at NARC Over Corruption But Tuju Warns Him Bluntly: Don't Mix Politics With Aid," *Daily Nation*, Front Page Story, July 5, 2005; Francis Openda, "You are not Fair to Kenya, Tuju Tells US," *The Standard*, back page story, July 5, 2005.

⁷² *Daily Nation*, July 27, 2005; editorial, "Demos a Curse of Business,"

⁷³ Oscar Obonyo, "One Man's Obsession With Street Protests," *Sunday Nation*, July 31, 2005.

depicting those who fought against colonial rule, as ungrateful primitives to be despised and crushed both physically and mentally. It is not a surprise that most of those who engage in Gikuyu bashing academese were high school and college students just as Kenya was acquiring independence.

On their part, the Gikuyu responded and respond to the bashing in a number of ways. At times they appeared to accept the bashing and to lie low like envelops. They did this in the hope that they could avoid more bashing by being cooperative with the bashers. When this tactic did not appear to work, they became defiant and this defiance was manifested in cultural activities, in political activities, and when necessary in violent self-defense. In the process, a sense of pride in being Kikuyu, and the adoption of a collective decision to reject association with the bashers, came to prevail among the Kikuyu in the 1990s. The Kikuyu political rejection of KANU was therefore based on a perception that KANU was responsible for all forms of Gikuyu bashing.

Once KANU was defeated and another “Kuke” was elected president, a new Gikuyu bashing campaign appear to have been unleashed mainly because the new president wanted to make independent decisions. Kenya, being a “client state”, was expected to blindly follow the instructions and “advice” from the new “governors” representing the interests of the “master states.” Its overdependence had plunged it from being merely a *neo-colony* into being a desperate *post-modern colony* that existed only to be ordered around. It actually seemed to accept the orders when Moi was president and therefore to have had a “civilised relationship” with the British and the Americans. Making independent decisions not approved by the “master states”, therefore, appears “cheeky” and especially annoying when that “cheekiness” encouraged other “client states” to gang up and reject solutions that they had no part in formulating.

For this “cheekiness,” Kenya had to be punished, it was made difficult for it to extricate itself from its *post-modern colonial* situation. In the process, there are perpetual threats to cut all sorts of aid if Kenya does not accept demands designed to please the donors at the expense of Kenya. It accounts for strange utterances by foreigners encouraging Kenyans in civil service, civil society, NGOs, and the media, to have the “courage to stand up” and to agitate against the Kibaki regime. The irony was that as one of the “governors” was castigating Kibaki about “corruption,” he was participating in a corrupt media exercise called the Journalist of the Year Award. The feuds between the donors and the Kibaki regime, therefore, are more a result of a *client state* trying to free itself from the clutches of the master state; a slave trying to be free from the master, than a concern for Kenyans. It is a “cheeky” Kikuyu, running a *client state*, confronting *post-modern colonial masters* or the master states and re-fighting the Mau Mau War at different levels.

Chapter Seven

A Political Overview of Post-colonial Kenya, 1963-2002

Introduction

Political development in independent Kenya has gone through a pattern of socio-political fluctuations that can be classified into six parts. First, is the euphoria of the 1960s, associated with independence and general public faith in Jomo Kenyatta as leader. Second, are the disappointments brought about by the Kenyatta regimes's political repression in the 1970s. Third, came the expectations related to the transition to Moi's presidency that had a lot of public goodwill that dissipated by 1982. Fourth, is the period of tyranny associated with the imposition of Moi's *finbo ideology* in the 1980s, and the decree that Kenyans stop thinking. Fifth, was the prolonged shifting of initiatives from the political class to the public in the political struggles symbolized by the "Yote Yawezekana" chant, which culminated in the NARC government. Finally, is the mixed bag performance involving domestic and international forces witnessed in the Kibaki regime in its first three years.

Uhuru na Kenyatta

The foundations for the future were laid with British involvement between 1960 and December 1964, starting with the 1960 Lancaster House Constitutional Conference that spelt doom for white rule in Kenya.¹ Africans got together and created a colony-wide party, KANU, only to be frustrated by the settlers who rebaptised themselves a small 'white tribe' and then persuaded other 'small tribes' to join them in KADU. KANU was thus labeled a party of big bad tribes, namely the Kikuyu because of Mau Mau and the Luo because Oginga Odinga had defied colonial designs to sideline Kenyatta.²

¹ George Bennett, *Kenya: A Political History, The Colonial Period* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp.147-150.

² Macharia Munene, "The Colonial Policies of Segregating the Kikuyu," *ChemChemi: International Journal of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume 2, Number 1,

The campaign slogan became *Uhuru na Kenyatta*. This settler ploy failed in that, voters chose KANU and rejected KADU in the general election held in February 1961, dubbed the 'Kenyatta Election'.³ The settler expectation had been that fear would convince enough Africans to vote for KADU and thereby perpetuate settler rule through indirect means. The failure to make KADU more popular than KANU, and given that KANU rather than KADU was likely to form the central government when time came, led the settlers to "cook" up the notion of *majimbo* or regionalism. The idea here was to make the anticipated central government impotent through entrenched interests even if they were detrimental to national will. Majimboism was subsequently elevated to a major campaign slogan as a way of sowing distrust in KANU, and possibly to split the country.⁴

The idea of splitting independent Kenya had many angles. In the Northeast, for instance, people of Somali extraction heeded the call of the newly established Somali state to demand that they be united with Somalia rather than be part of a new African controlled Kenya.⁵ Dealing with Somali irredentism would remain a headache for independent Kenya. An American missionary led a group of Kenyan Maasai to Tanganyika to persuade Prime Minister Julius K. Nyerere to annex the Maasai inhabited parts of Kenya into Tanganyika; Nyerere turned them down.⁶ Similarly, people of Arab extraction along the Kenya coast started claiming that they wanted to unite with their Arab brothers in Zanzibar, the *Mwambao* Movement, rather than accept rule by Africans.⁷ The *majimbo* formula, therefore, was splintering the country and creating political turmoil in order to avoid a possible KANU victory.

Such was the state of political intrigues when the British called for a Constitutional conference at Lancaster House in 1962, to find a way of extricating themselves, while ensuring a continued influence on Kenya. KANU leader, Jomo Kenyatta was not expected to participate because he was not a member of the Legislative Council

2002, pp. 41-42; Wilfred B. Havelock, Letter to the Editor, "Of Majimboism at Independence," *Daily Nation*, Thursday, July 28, 1994.

³ George Bennett and Carl G. Rosberg, *The Kenyatta Election: Kenya 1960-1961* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 121-122.

⁴ Gibson Kamau Kuria, "Constitutional Review: A Critique," *FINANCE*, November 29, 1998, p.21; Havelock, "Of Majimboism at Independence".

⁵ Korwa G. Adar, *Kenya's Foreign Policy Behaviour Towards Somalia, 1963-1983* (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1994), pp. 159-187.

⁶ Julius K. Nyerere, "Reflections," as printed in Haroub Othman, editor, *Reflections on Leadership in Africa: Forty Years After Independence* (Dar es Salaam: VUB University Press, 2000), p.20.

⁷ Adar, *Kenyan Foreign Policy*, pp.164-165; Hyder Kindy, *Life and Politics in Mombasa* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1972), pp. 184-187; BA Ogot, "The Decisive Years 1956-1963," in BA Ogot and WR Ochieng', editors, *Decolonisation and Independence in Kenya, 1940-93* (Nairobi: EAEP, 1995), p. 67.

but Kariuki Njiiri vacated his seat and gave Kenyatta the chance.⁸ Kenyatta then led the KANU side to face the anti-KANU camp at Lancaster House, comprising various forces associated with KADU, the settlers, and the British government.

At Lancaster House, the expected KANU electoral victory, given the experience in February 1961,⁹ influenced the discussions and the objective became to weaken and put obstacles on a future KANU government. The result was a mixture of American and British models that created an unworkable shortsighted constitutional mongrel. From the Americans, it borrowed the federal idea of splitting powers between the national government and local political entities, called *majimbo*, whose structure and size was yet to be determined. From the British, was the notion of the executive being the main force in the legislature with cabinet officers being members of parliament. The two were bound to collide.

Practical politics dictated that, KANU not lose opportunities. Kenyatta persuaded his KANU side to accept the defective *majimbo* constitutional draft, as a matter of political expediency,¹⁰ to avoid giving the British an excuse to hand political power to KADU. To Kenyatta's mind, the expected elections would be a kind of referendum on the *majimbo* constitution and he was sure that his side would win amongst the African voters. In the May 1963 elections, therefore, Kenyatta insisted that there was no room for the *majimbo* structure that the British had imposed on Kenya's future and, as expected, Kenyatta and his KANU won.¹¹ After taking on the responsibility for internal self-government, Madaraka, on June 1, 1963 with Kenyatta as the prime minister, KANU started dismantling the *majimbo* structure. In September 1963, Kenyatta went to London to work on the final independence document and succeeded in removing some powers previously reserved for the regions and in increasing the ability of the central government to amend the constitution. *Uhuru* or independence on December 12, 1963 was therefore attained under a document that was substantially different from the 1962 one.¹² A year later, December 1964, Kenya's status changed from that of being a dominion to that of a republic.

⁸ G.G. Kariuki, *The Illusion of Power: Fifty Years in Kenyan Politics* (Nairobi: Kenway Publications, 2001), pp. 30, 33f.

⁹ Bennett and Rosberg, *The Kenyatta Election: Kenya*, pp. 121-122.

¹⁰ Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru: An Autobiography* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1967), pp.228-230.

¹¹ Macharia Munene, "The Manipulation of the Constitution in Kenya, 1963-1996: A Reflective Essay," *HEKIMA: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume II, Number 1, 2003, pp.45-47.

¹² Ibid.

Kenyatta's presidency in the 1960s

Kenya became a republic on December 12, 1964 with a new constitution and political reality. KADU advocates of *majimboism* disbanded themselves,¹³ joined KANU and were rewarded with ministerial appointments. The new republican constitution, mainly the work of the Minister for Constitutional Affairs, Tom Mboya, strengthened the national government against regional bodies. There was to be an executive president as head of both state and government. It also ensured that if the president died, the vice-president would not automatically become president. That executive president, as Mboya had pointed out before the May 1963 general election, was Kenyatta. His vice-president Oginga Odinga was Mboya's ideological rival.

In the raging debates on socialism regarding the direction Kenya should take, Kenyatta leaned more towards the West, identified with Mboya than to the East, associated with Odinga. He had in his first Madaraka Day speech, June 1, 1963, warned that the "Marxist theory of class warfare" was irrelevant to Kenya and added: "attitudes which were appropriate when we were fighting for independence have to be revised."¹⁴ Not having time for socialism, Kenyatta used Mboya to terminate the debate on socialism in 1965 by issuing *Session Paper Number 10: African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya*. The document made it clear that African socialism meant capitalism with an African twist and that there was no room for scientific socialism.¹⁵ With the session paper in place, Kenyatta proceeded to tell those complaining about scientific socialism to keep quiet because he had answered their concerns.¹⁶ The next thing was for Mboya to push Odinga from the vice-presidency by creating *majimbo* vice-presidencies in KANU in 1966, after which, Odinga resigned to form Kenya People's Union (KPU).¹⁷

Mboya's battles with Odinga, other than ideological, were personal and in this he competed with other ambitious men in the art of political intrigues as former anti-Odinga allies turned on each other. Odinga had been replaced as vice-president by Joseph Murumbi. Murumbi lasted barely a year before resigning, in 1967, only for his job to be taken by a former KADU chairman who professed not to have a mind

¹³ Frontpage story, "Moi Tells Why he Defected From KADU to Join KANU," East African Standard, Friday, August 18, 2000.

¹⁴ G. Macharia Munene, "Constitutional Development in Kenya: A Historical Perspective," in Yash Vyas, Kivutha Kibwana, Okech-Owiti, Smokin Wanjala, editors, *Law and Development in the Third World* (Nairobi: Faculty of Law, University of Nairobi, 1994), pp. 58-59.

¹⁵ Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism, 1964-1971* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 220-224.

¹⁶ Kenyatta's statement on "African Socialism" in Jomo Kenyatta, *Suffering Without Bitterness: The Founding of the Kenya Nation* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), p.273.

¹⁷ Tony Hall, "Odinga May Have Been Forced to Quit-Mboya," *Sunday Nation*, April 17, 1966.

of his own, Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, and therefore appeared to be safe.¹⁸ In knowing how to play safe and please those in power, Moi had praised British colonialism in February 1956 saying: “When I look back over the history of the African district councils, I cannot but recognise how much more Africans owe to her Majesty’s Government—administrators who have done so much in the darkest years—days when Africans were in the dark, and now have come to see the light.”¹⁹ By giving the impression that he did not have a mind of his own, Moi was safe as vice-president from where he watched political intrigues within KANU that turned and rotated around, Mboya’s purported ability to mesmerize MPs into making him president in case a vacancy occurred.

These intrigues came to the fore when Kenyatta suffered a heart attack in 1968 and a scheme was hatched to change the constitution. One provision, which failed because of public outcry, wanted to raise the minimum age for electing a president from 35 to 40; Mboya was 38. The provisions that succeeded, however, made a sitting vice-president the acting president for a period of three months, within which, a presidential election would be held, barred independent candidates, permitted the president to nominate 12 legislators of his choice, and empowered him to detain, without trial, any person that he considered to be a threat. The removal of the provision for independent candidates ensured that no popular person, who was not approved by the KANU machinery, would win the election.²⁰

As Mboya’s political star declined, the country entered into one of the most turbulent years, with Mboya at the center of that turbulence. Mboya, concerned that he had lost his influence, was a worried man and contemplated quitting Kenyan politics to join the United Nations.²¹ In part, his worry was because the Gikuyu elite around Kenyatta had started organizing mass oathing in 1969 to bind the Gikuyu, Embu, Meru communities to stop the presidency from going to other tribes; the Kiambu version of the oath reportedly insisted that motor cycles will never cross the Chania River.²² There was, however, a lot of internal opposition to

¹⁸ For Moi’s claim that he did not have a mind of his own, see Sheila Rule, “No Tune Like His Own Tune, Kenyan Tells Nation”, *New York Times*, November 7, 1984.

¹⁹ Daniel arap Moi, Contribution to debate on ... the motion on “Appointment of an African as President of North Nyanza African District Council,” Crown and Protectorate of Kenya, *Legislative Council Debates, Tenth Council, Fifth Session, Second Meeting, February 1956*, pp. 97-98.

²⁰ Munene, “The Manipulation of the Constitution in Kenya,” p. 49.

²¹ Sir Michael Blundell, *A Love Affair With the Sun: A Memoir of Seventy Years in Kenya* (Nairobi: Kenway Publications, 1994), p. 133.

²² The writer started hearing about the ten shillings land-buying scheme in Gatundu in the early months of 1969. On the day that Mboya was shot dead, July 5, 1969, a drunk in a Nairobi estate, holding a bottle of beer in one hand was shouting at the top of his voice that the Gikuyu had killed Mboya, and there were speculations as to whether the oathings had anything to do with the death. The rumour about motor cycles not crossing the Chania River became a political factor in the election of 1969 for the Starehe Constituency in Nairobi seat between Peter Kinyanjui who came from Kiambu and Charles Rubia from Murang’a. The rumour also accused

this oathing and that might explain the complaint by former Kikuyu Central Association, KCA, leaders in June 1969 that there was too much disunity in the Gikuyu community.²³ There was, therefore, a growing tension in the country on July 4, 1969, when Mboya returned to Nairobi from his travels.

Back in Kenya, and aware of the oathings that had been taking place, Mboya was assassinated in the streets of Nairobi on July 5, 1969,²⁴ his death raised the nascent hostility between the Gikuyu and the Luo a notch higher; in death, he became a symbol of unity between his followers and those of his personal and ideological rival, Odinga and of an animosity towards the Gikuyu as a people, and Kenyatta, in particular. According to political activist Wambui Waiyaki Otieno, the Luo believed that, "KANU, and perhaps the president, were implicated in Mboya's death."²⁵ This Luo hostility towards the Gikuyu crudely manifested itself in October 1969, in a violent confrontation at Kisumu when Kenyatta went to open the Russian financed Nyanza General Hospital.²⁶ Kenyatta, claimed that, Achieng Oneko, who had been Kenyatta's fellow convict, liked challenges and going to Kisumu was his way of "just daring the Luo people and Odinga."²⁷

That dare had nasty consequences because some people stoned the presidential motorcade, which in turn, accounted for the tension and acrimonious exchange of words at the ceremony, between Kenyatta, the president, and Odinga, the KPU leader.²⁸ To Odinga's persistent chants of *njaa*, meaning that people were hungry, Kenyatta had retorted with a parable, in the parable, Luo land was fertile, and all that the Luo people needed to do was to farm. He had then asked whether Odinga wanted Kenyatta's wife to do the digging for him.²⁹ There then followed riots with a barrage of stones thrown at the president and with the security men firing into the chanting, stone-throwing, crowd.

Kinyanjui of misusing oathing money from Gatundu and he lost the election to Rubia. More information obtained from HMS Kabeca Mwaniki, June 11, 2004, HAK Conference at Baringo Country Club, Baringo, June 10-13, 2004; Mwaniki had participated in the oathing of 1969.

²³ Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya*, p. 236.

²⁴ Discussions with Frederick Waweru, Tuesday, June 29, 2004. Waweru was Mboya's personal assistant from 1967 to 1969 and was with Mboya in the office on the morning of July 5, 1969.

²⁵ Wambui Waiyaki Otieno, *Mau Mau's daughter: A Life History* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1998), p. 104.

²⁶ Koigi wa Wamwere, *I Refuse to Die: My Journey For Freedom* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), pp. 171-174.

²⁷ Maina Muiruri, "The Crisis that Shook Kenyatta's Government," *Sunday Standard*, August 20, 2000.

²⁸ Wamwere, *I Refuse to Die*, p. 174.

²⁹ This writer happened to be listening to the live radio broadcast of the events in Kisumu. When Kenyatta uttered some expletives directed at Odinga, the radio transmission was cut off. For excerpts on the Kenyatta-Odinga verbal exchanges see E.S. Atieno Odhiambo, "Ethnic Cleansing and Civil Society in Kenya 1969-1992," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Volume 22, Number 1, 2004, pp. 30-32, 41-42.

The riot became the excuse for banning KPU and the subsequent subject of sometimes emotional and politically charged numbers game among the intellectuals that doubled the numbers of people who had died. It started with Colin Leys who, in 1974, claimed that “as Kenyatta’s car left, the crowd pressed towards it, his bodyguard fired into the crowd, killing ten and wounding seventy.”³⁰ Six years later, Joseph Karimi and Philip Ochieng doubled the number as they asserted, “the Presidential bodyguards opened fire on the spot, killing close to 20 people and wounding 100 others.”³¹ Nine years later, William R. Ochieng put together a book, in honour of Bethwell A. Ogot, in which he more than doubled the Karimi/Ochieng number. He wrote, “Jomo Kenyatta was pelted with stones and ... the police shot and killed 43 people in the demonstrating crowd.”³² In addition, in another nine years, Ogot wrote “The Siege of Ramogi” in which he lamented the plight of the Luo in Kenya’s politics and more than doubled Ochieng’s figures. “Kenyatta’s bodyguard and the General Service Unit opened fire on the crowd, leaving at least 100 people ... dead,” Ogot claimed as he went on to call for a change of terminologies. The shooting, he asserted, should be called “the ‘Kisumu massacre’ and ... a suitable monument ... erected to commemorate these... martyrs.”³³ Because of the riots, the government banned the KPU³⁴ and it ceased to be a force politically. Kenya became a one party state in fact, if not in theory.

The events of 1969 marked an end to a period of transition from colonialism to political independence. The euphoria that had been associated with independence dissipated as the effect of the growing Kenyatta autocracy began to bite. At the same time, internal friction within the ruling clique produced political atrocities, cutthroat political competition, and so much Gikuyu-Luo ethnic hostility that the Luo developed a belief that they were collectively under what Bethwell A. Ogot termed a siege, “the Siege of Ramogi”.³⁵

Repression in the 1970s

The uhuru euphoria of the 1960s turned into disappointments in the 1970s with Kenya as a de facto single party state. Vices associated with unbridled capitalism

³⁰ Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya*, p. 237.

³¹ Joseph Karimi and Philip Ochieng, *The Kenyatta Succession* (Nairobi: Transafrica, 1980), p. 14.

³² William Ochieng’, “Independent Kenya, 1963-1986,” in William R. Ochieng’, editor, *A Modern History of Kenya, 1985-1980: In Honour of B.A. Ogot* (Nairobi: Evans Brothers Limited, 1989), p. 208.

³³ B. A. Ogot, “The Siege of Ramogi: From National Coalitions to Ethnic coalitions, 1960-1998,” in Bethwell A. Ogot, editor, *Building on the Indigenous: Selected Essays, 1981-1998* (Kisumu: Anyange Press, 1999), pp. 282-283.

³⁴ Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya*, p. 237.

³⁵ B. A. Ogot, “The Siege of Ramogi: From National Coalitions to Ethnic coalitions, 1960-1998,” in Bethwell A. Ogot, editor, *Building on the Indigenous: Selected Essays, 1981-1998* (Kisumu: Anyange Press, 1999), pp. 277-288.

took the center stage with those hang up on ideology being relegated to the periphery of Kenya's socio-political arena. Kenya was depicted as a neo-colonial entity but in comparison with its neighbours in the South, socialistic Tanzania, or the flagellating Uganda in the West, the Kenya political class believed that it was doing so well that one of them, Charles Njonjo, reportedly celebrated the break-up of the East African Community. That doing well and celebration, however, was accompanied by the application of the detention laws that had been passed in 1968 as well as other repressive activities that made the period a disappointing one, a low time record.

Kenya's neo-colonial status, close identification with the West and emphasis on the capitalistic structures attracted several critics of different stripes. Some like Chief Justice Kitili Mwendwa and, Chief of General Staff, General Joseph Ndolo, tried to organize a coup and failed. The plotters were treated relatively lightly and left to stew in their own shame. Others like Josiah Mwangi Kariuki, a prominent politician and a former Mau Mau detainee, complained that Kenya had become a society of ten millionaires amidst ten million beggars; his body, doused in acid, was found in Ngong Hills. Martin Shikuku and Jean Marie Seroney claimed that KANU was not only dead, they asserted that there was an effort to kill Parliament in a similar manner; they ended up in detention. A disillusioned academic, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, was also detained for writing books and plays castigating the Kenyatta regime for forgetting freedom fighters. All these were signs of high expectations gone sour.

While it was possible for members of the political class to deal with disgruntled elements through the magnanimity of ignoring the plotters, through occasional deaths, and through detentions, they could not contain feuds within them as to who should become president when and if Kenyatta died. Kenyatta's potential death had dominated Kenya's politics and the Mboya-Odinga jostling was based on the supposed likelihood of Kenyatta's death. With Odinga out, attention turned to Mboya when Kenyatta suffered a heart attack in 1968 and there was a constitutional amendment to stop Mboya from taking up the mantle of president, followed by tribal oathings that had fouled Kenya's political air. The issue of Kenyatta's health, reappeared in 1976, and set the stage for further acrimony.

As in 1968, there was yet another effort to change the constitution in 1976; the change was aimed at blocking an individual from becoming president. The intended victim this time was the vice-president, Moi. But unlike Odinga and Mboya before him, Moi was prepared for political intrigues and had gathered allies on his side. He had ensured that national and branch officials of the ruling party, KANU, in most of the districts were his allies ready to repulse his potential rivals, and amongst his allies was the Attorney General, Charles Njonjo. It was Njonjo who finished debates on Kenyatta's possible death by asserting that it was criminal to imagine that a president can die. When Kenyatta died, in August 1978, Moi was securely placed to take over the presidency, with Kenyatta's death, Kenya moved

from a low of the 1970s into a high associated with Moi's assumption of the presidency. Although it failed, the *change the constitution movement of 1976* left a bad taste in Kenya's political mouth that could be effectively exploited.

The Moi political honeymoon

Moi's rule began with a lot of goodwill and high expectations from Kenyans that resembled a political honeymoon, he was a good actor and wanted to create an image of himself as a caring, unambitious, African Christian statesman in tune with Western interests. He was, Kihika Kimani noted, "loyal to the late president ... is a good Christian ... has been patient and never at any time was he ambitious."³⁶ He received delegations of goodwill, among the most interesting being that, of supposed Kikuyu political heavyweights Mwai Kibaki, Mbiyu Koinange, and Julius Gikonyo Kiano. Kiano said that they supported Moi because Kenyatta had appointed him. Koinange, however, spoke in Gikuyu and told people to reflect on whether they had planted coffee or beans, and Kibaki told Moi that they had accepted him as president because it was right, but not out of fear.³⁷ Implied in Kibaki's statement was a warning not to mess up the country or Moi would have problems. There was also Oginga Odinga who helped to cool down political temperatures in Nyanza province where people reportedly were refusing to pledge loyalty to Moi.³⁸ The Luo, according to William R. Ochieng, had reportedly "danced gleefully when Kenyatta died" and saw no need to continue with "the politics of opposition" once Moi became president.³⁹

Although he was pleased to receive pledges of loyalty, Moi quickly gave notice of what was to come. He wanted the whole country to know who was the boss; that initiative would be stifled and intellectuals would be relegated into oblivion. In September 1978, he asserted that, all Kenyans were answerable to him and he was answerable only to God.⁴⁰ In the effort to create a Moi imprint, he proclaimed the 'Nyayo' slogan to mean he would follow in Kenyatta's footsteps and at the same time adopted the symbol of a well polished 'fimbo' or club, in contrast to Kenyatta's flywhisk. With it, came an ideology of the *fimbo*, which was close to the

³⁶ Joseph Karimi and Philip Ochieng, *The Kenyatta Succession* (Nairobi: Transafrica, 1980), pp. 3-6.

³⁷ Intermittent Oral Discussions with Julius Gikonyo Kiano in 1996-1997. After Koinange spoke, Moi had turned to Kiano and asked, what it was that Koinange had said? Kiano had responded that the Gikuyu used was so deep that he himself had problems understanding.

³⁸ *Daily Nation*, September 11, 1978; *Sunday Nation*, September 10, 1978.

³⁹ William Ochieng, "Independent Kenya, 1963-1986," in William Ochieng, editor, *A Modern History of Kenya 1875-1980 in Honor of B.A. Ogot* (Nairobi: Evans Brothers, 1989), pp. 215, 217.

⁴⁰ *Sunday Nation*, September 17, 1978, pp.1 and 3.

Communist political ideology⁴¹ and led to the concept of “true *nyayo* follower”, as indicator of the level of a person’s loyalty to Moi. Since the media was vital to the implementation of fimbo ideology and the concept of ‘true *nyayo* follower’, the government pressured the media to conform. The *East African Standard* and the *Weekly Review* succumbed to pressure, with the *East African Standard* in the forefront of determining who was a better *Nyayo* follower than the other and of promoting the notion that *Nyayoism* could be measured with some degree of exactitude.⁴² Although the instrument for measuring a person’s *Nyayoness* was never explained, it could be safely termed a *Nyayometre*.

Media control, however, was not people control as indicated by Odinga’s utterances. Poised to regain his parliamentary seat Odinga politically shot himself in the foot by, accusing the dead Kenyatta of being a land-grabber. He then visited England in 1982 and accused African regimes of mounting one party dictatorships and later complained of “*payukering* cabinet ministers” who condoned “reported bribery and corruption in their midst.” An angry Moi expelled Odinga from KANU because of insulting ministers after which, Odinga decided to create a socialist party in Kenya.⁴³ In response, Moi imposed a constitutional amendment, Section 2A, declaring Kenya to be a single party state with KANU as the sole party, this removed the possibility of anyone challenging Moi.⁴⁴

Thereafter, a different problem arose in the military. Junior officers had witnessed Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe, president of Liberia in 1981 strutting the streets of Nairobi in his military fatigues, during the Organisation of African Unity Heads of State Conference. Doe had shot his way to power and some non-commissioned officers in Kenya Air Force were probably so impressed by Doe that they started plotting how to actuate the idea of one of them being president.⁴⁵ They received logistical and moral support from political activists like Raila Odinga who reportedly made his car available to ferry people⁴⁶ The attempted coup was made on August 1, 1982 and, although it failed, it shook Moi and all those associated with him. Moi, as explained by Andrew Morton, started thinking of launching guerrilla warfare using the Pokot, in case the coup succeeded. He did not have to because, it failed.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Macharia Munene, “Culture and Religion in Conflict Management, *African Media Review* Volume 11, Number 3, 1997, pp. 33-34.

⁴² Philip Ochieng, *I Accuse the Press: an Insider’s View of the Media and Politics in Africa* (Nairobi: ACTS Press, 1992), pp. 116-121.

⁴³ *Weekly Review*, May 21, 1982, pp.4-5; *Weekly Review*, May 28, 1982, p. 9.

⁴⁴ Main story, *Weekly Review*, June 4, 1982.

⁴⁵ *Weekly Review*, June 26, 1981, p. 10. See picture of Doe wearing military gear.

⁴⁶ *Weekly Review*, January 14, 1983, pp. 18-19. Story on Raila’s treason case.

⁴⁷ Andrew Morton, *Moi: The Making of An African Statesman* (London: Michael O’Mara Books, 1998), pp. 189-190.

The high, associated with the transition from the Kenyatta to the Moi regime, therefore, was shortlived. The initial goodwill disappeared with the imposition of *fimbo ideology* in which Moi's *rungu* became symbolic of the clobbering that those who differed with his thinking would receive. To stop Odinga from starting a socialistic party to compete with KANU, he imposed an amendment to the Kenya Constitution, Section 2A, making KANU the only legal party in Kenya. The failed coup that followed, partly inspired by Master Sergeant Samuel Doe of Liberia and partly orchestrated by Raila, was good reason for Moi to shed off the image of a caring, Christian statesman, and to gradually acquire the image of a tyrant as he demanded that Kenyans stop thinking and do his bidding; the high of 1978 sunk into a deep low after 1982.

Imposing the fimbo ideology

Moi did not have to use the Pokot to start a civil war because the coup failed but he decided to carry out a political purge, systematically doing two things that would entrench him as the unquestioned ruler of Kenya. These were the purging of former 'friends' and a crackdown on intellectuals and, those called dissidents. First, he seemingly decided to fix former "friends" and *prima donnas* in order to remove the impression that he was beholden to anyone. The first victim of this purge was Charles Njonjo, who had created the impression that Moi was dependent on him, Njonjo was accused of harbouring treasonous thoughts.⁴⁸ The irony was that in 1980, when he thought he was close to Moi, he had reminded lecturers that they were "employed to teach but not to mislead students" with Marxist ideas.⁴⁹ Although Moi and Njonjo were in agreement that universities were bad places full of people with Marxist ideas, it was necessary for Moi to indicate to Njonjo and the country that he was in charge. Bishop Henry John Okullu of Maseno argued that Njonjo was "'crucified' by his own close associates."⁵⁰ Subsequently, anyone identified with Njonjo was exiled into political oblivion.

The second thing that Moi did, other than freeing himself from the appearance of dependency on Njonjo, was to mount an intensified crackdown on people described as *Mwakenya*, and on academics who insisted on thinking. He reiterated his position on thinking in September 1984, when he decreed that, thinking was essentially a presidential prerogative, indeed, he ordered all Kenyans "to sing like a parrot after me" and not to have ideas of their own.⁵¹ Those who could not sing, he

⁴⁸ "Miller's Report and story in *Weekly Review*, December 21, 1984, pp. 4-40; see also comments in *Weekly Review*, October 14, 1988, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁹ "Yesterday in Parliament," *East African Standard*, March 7, 1980, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Bishop Henry Okullu, *Quest for Justice: An Autobiography of Bishop Henry Okullu* (Kisumu, Kenya: Shalom Publishers, 1997), p. 114.

⁵¹ Rule, "No Tune Like His Own Tune"; see also Glenn Frankel, "Scars of Failed Coup Attempt Still Etched on Kenyan Psyche", *The Washington Post*, September 30, 1984.

believed, were “Marxist agents serving the interests of foreigners” and he vowed to deal with them ruthlessly because they were advocates of “anarchy and totalitarianism.”⁵² In the process of dealing with them ruthlessly, detention without trial and torture became so common that in 1989 he explained: “Of course we torture people. But we don’t torture everybody. We torture the ringleaders of Mwakenya.”⁵³

In the process, national institutions collapsed as they concentrated on singing and not on thinking.⁵⁴ With apparent Moi advise, universities recruited intellectual homeguards to fight what he called intellectual terrorists. Moi had written in his Nyayo Philosophy, “I see no systematic alternative to the intellectual re-education of staff for the purpose of reforming the learning atmosphere” in which students would “evolve into intellectual homeguards against intellectual terrorism, political agitation and subversion in the universities.”⁵⁵ Subsequently, argued Muga K’Olale of Egerton University, some lecturers appeared to be “occupied with efforts to subject universities to academic incarceration at the expense of development.”⁵⁶ To avoid being sent to ‘reeducation’ centres, lecturers became part of the “cheering crowd” that Casper Odegi-Awuondo said, wanted to keep a safe distance from Kamiti prison.⁵⁷

The national institution that officially sent academics and other intellectuals to reeducation centers was the Judiciary. Under tight presidential control, some judges and magistrates tried to avoid what Justice Sachdeva described as operating in a political ‘vacuum’, as they sent critics to reeducation centers while claiming that the Bill of Rights was inoperative. And because not all judges subscribed to the political ‘vacuum’ theory, the constitution was changed to remove the security of tenure from judges, the auditor general, and the attorney general.⁵⁸ The effect, as retired Justice William Mbaya observed, was judicial disaster. He asserted, “the menace of the Executive’s interference with the Judiciary is manifested in consistent pronouncements by the President on matters sub-judice” and as a result the High Court “consistently abdicated its responsibility, apparently because of

⁵² *The Weekly Review*, June 11, 1982, p.8; June 18, 1982, p.4; June 25, 1982, p. 9.

⁵³ *Africa Analysis*, March 17, 1989, p. 10.

⁵⁴ Macharia Munene, “National Institutions Response to Terrorism,” in Makumi Mwagiru and Maria Nzomo, editors, *International Responses to Terrorism* (Nairobi: Heinrich-Boll/IDIS, forthcoming).

⁵⁵ Daniel Arap Moi, *Kenya African Nationalism: Nyayo Philosophy and Principles* (Nairobi: Macmillan, 1986), p. 131.

⁵⁶ Muga K’Olale, “Uncouth Breed of Professors,” *Society*, December 13, 1993, p. 22.

⁵⁷ Casper Odegi-Awuondo, *The Rise of the “Cheering Crowd”: Fiction and Kenya’s Political History* (Nairobi: Basic Books, 1992), p.15.

⁵⁸ Macharia Munene, *The Politics of Transition in Kenya, 1995-1998* (Nairobi: Quest and Insight, 2001), pp. 11-12; Gitobu Imanyara, “Judges Can Say ‘No’ to the President,” *The Nairobi Law Monthly*, No. 66, January 1997, p. 20.

lack of independence from the Executive.”⁵⁹ Richard Otieno Kwach, was appointed Justice of the Court of Appeal by Moi, in 1988, after winning the ethnically charged SM Otieno burial case as a reward, supposedly, for upholding African culture,⁶⁰ shared Mbaya’s disappointment in the Judiciary. He complained “the highest court in the land has no jurisdiction in cases involving fundamental rights of the citizen.” further, he asserted that some judges had “compromised ... principles for short-term advantages,” and thus the Judiciary was also to blame for keeping silent and watching itself being eroded.⁶¹ In reality then, the judiciary was also purged of free thought.

Challenges to the fimbo ideology

Although the purge was meant to make Moi unquestionable, things went wrong as he prepared to celebrate his ten year rule in 1988. When he visited the United States in 1987, he was questioned over the detention of Gibson Kamau Kuria, a human rights lawyer.⁶² He then imposed a new electoral system, the *mlolongo*, to weed out politicians he did not want but this aroused complaints, mainly from the clergy, that the process was undemocratic and subject to abuse. Minister for Local Government Moses Mudavadi threatened to abolish freedom of worship⁶³ and Shariff Nassir uttered his infamous words.. *wapende wasipende*. In the two elections, held under the *mlolongo* system in 1988, people with shorter lines were declared the winners and in some cases, people who had not been candidates, unexpectedly won.

Among those expected to lose was Vice-President Kibaki but after he survived the attempted rigging, he was dumped, and replaced by Josphat Karanja. Another man in bad books was Kenneth Matiba, after complaining of election rigging of the Kiharu seat, he staged a public resignation to avoid the possibility of humiliation through being fired on radio.⁶⁴ He became the first minister to resign from Moi’s regime and thereby acquired the status of a folk hero for daring to embarrass the

⁵⁹ Onesmus Kilonzo, “Judiciary cowed, says ex-judge,” *Daily Nation*, July 16, 1997, p.1.

⁶⁰ Blaine Harden, *Africa: Dispatches From a Fragile Continent* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), pp. 95-129; David William Cohen and E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo, *Burying SM: The Politics of Knowledge and the Sociology of Power in Africa* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1992), p. 86.

⁶¹ Bob Odalo, “Kwach: Dignity of the Judiciary being eroded,” *Sunday Nation*, October 19, 1997, pp. 1-2.

⁶² Harden, *Africa: Dispatches From a Fragile Continent*, pp. 255-257; Macharia Munene, “Cold War Disillusionment and Africa,” in Macharia Munene, JD Olewe Nyunya, and Korwa Adar, editors, *The United States and Africa: From Independence to the End of the Cold War* (Nairobi: EAEP, 1995) pp. 25-44; *Weekly Review*, March 20, 1987.

⁶³ Okullu, *Quest for Justice*, p. 121; Jane Parlez, “Kenya Threatens to Curb Churches,” *New York Times*, 5 October, 1988.

⁶⁴ Matiba has given this explanation in the presence of this writer during casual talks.

president. The year of celebration thus became the year of disruption of the *Nyayo* rule. The *Mlolongo* election eroded Moi's political supremacy as defiance, both individual and public, helped to shift initiative for political action from Moi and his handlers. After his unexpected resignation from the cabinet, Matiba lost his Kiharu parliamentary seat and this thus occasioned a by-election in 1989 that was highly scrutinized. Then, Kareithi attracted attention by publicizing the Kiharu by-electoral fraud in his *Financial Review* after which the public was treated to the spectacle of Hilary Ngweno, then Moi's media man, using the courts to gag Kareithi. Although the government banned the *Financial Review*,⁶⁵ it had to contend with Gitobu Imanyara's *Nairobi Law Monthly*, Pius Naymora's *Society*, and Njehu Gatabaki's *Finance* who, the *Weekly Review* claimed in January 1993, "went for the government's neck with unprecedented and reckless enthusiasm".⁶⁶ These people became heroes because of the amount of risk they took and they accounted for the shift in political action.

Other individuals also helped to bring change, for example, Wangari Maathai stopped the government from building a 64 storey structure at Uhuru Park and responded to politicians by telling them to use what was above the neckline rather than what was below the waistline.⁶⁷ Bishop Henry Okullu ridiculed Oloo Aringo, then KANU chairman, for his psychopancy,⁶⁸ by calling for multipartism in December 1989. Rev. Timothy Njoya of the Presbeterian Church of East Africa, also called for change, as he compared single party states in Africa to failed communist states in Europe, and in death, Foreign Minister, Robert Ouko and Bishop, Alexander Muge, intensified public defiance because their deaths were blamed on government officials.

This defiance acquired two new dimensions in May 1990; international support for political change and public agitation for multi-partism. The international dimension was not new but it became pronounced at this time. Effective imposition and implementation of the *finbo* ideology had so emasculated national institutions, and the economy had deteriorated so much, that Kenya became overly dependent in everything that it did. It sunk deep into the dependency syndrome at a time when disillusioned master states were readjusting their relationships with client states such as Kenya by reducing bilateral dealings while stressing the role of multilateral institutions as new instruments of international control. It plummeted from being a neo-colony into being a post-modern colony that was answerable to multilateral

⁶⁵ Blaine Harden, "Kenya Bans Probing Magazine," *The Washington Post*, April 26, 1989; Jane Parlez, "Nairobi Orders Ban on 2nd Magazine in a Year," *New York Times*, May 10, 1989.

⁶⁶ *Weekly Review*, January 1, 1993, p. 52.

⁶⁷ *Weekly Review*, November 17, 1989, pp. 10-15; *Daily Nation*, November 24, 1989; Macharia Munene, "The Diplomatic Collision Course: US and Kenya in the Post-Cold War Period, 1988-1991," in P. Godfrey Okoth and Patrick K. Kakwenzire (editors), *The Americas Before and After Columbus* (Kampala: USIS, 1993), pp.88-89.

⁶⁸ Okullu, *Quest for Justice*, p. 125.

institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, acting on behalf of the master states that remain in the background to avoid blame in case anything goes wrong.

Occasionally, representatives of the master states would come out in the open away from hiding behind multilateral institutions and make it clear who was calling the shots, for instance, the United States ambassador to Kenya, Smith Hempstone, after he was frustrated in his effort to help Moi remain in good books with the international community, defied diplomatic tradition by supporting multi-party advocates. "I was perfectly prepared," Hempstone later wrote, "to see Moi lead that 'liberation' and benefit from it" but it seems he later changed his mind.⁶⁹

The beneficiaries of Hempstone's frustrations were those critics of Moi who lost a fear of government, and insisted that the country had collapsed because of incompetence, corruption, and bad political and economic management. Amongst these were Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia, they applied for a permit to hold a public rally at Kamkunji on Saturday, July 7 1990, in order to explain to Kenyans how single party rule had messed up the country. They did not get the permits, and this refusal set the stage for confrontation between the public on one side and the government on the other.⁷⁰ Although the leaders were detained on July 4th, the people still went to Kamkunji on July 7, 1990 and for three days, the paramilitary police, violently collided with citizens resulting in the death of at least 20 people. This show of lack of fear was a turning point in Kenya because after that it was no longer possible to restrict free speech effectively. This phenomenon of a public displaying its loss of fear of government constitutes what came to be termed *saba saba*.⁷¹

This defiance called for solid organization; first, Oginga Odinga tried to form a socialistic party and failed mainly because of Section 2A. The agitators then decided to create a "forum" rather than a party as a vehicle for pressuring the government, thus was born the Forum for Restoration of Democracy in Kenya (FORD), with Odinga as its interim chairman. The Forum comprised political veterans representing diverse interests, supported by a team of youngish and lesser known activists. It immediately commanded wide support and started calling for rallies. The purpose of the rally called at Kamkunji on Saturday, November 16, 1991 with or without a government permit, commented activist Martha Karua, was to demonstrate to Moi that Kenyans wanted pluralism. The rally never took place because the political leaders and the police spent time chasing each other in the streets of Nairobi but it produced the desired political effect in that the donors

⁶⁹ Smith Hempstone, "Africa's Tarnished Jewel," *The National Interest*, Winter 1995/1996, p.54; the same article is also published as "Kenya: A Tarnished Jewel," in *FINANCE: Special Supplement*, Vol.1 No. 2, 1996, p.11.

⁷⁰ Munene, "Diplomatic Collision Course," p. 90.

⁷¹ Macharia Munene, "Historical Perspective on Ethnic Relations in Kenya," *Wajibu: A Journal of Social and Religious Concern*, Vol. 7(3), 1992, pp.4-5.

meeting in Paris in November 1991 suspended aid for six months and demanded political reforms.

Moi then, according to Hempstone, “ordered his rubber-stamp parliament to revoke Article 2(A) of the Constitution, thus permitting multi-party politics.”⁷² The period of official single party rule, 1982 to 1991, was the lowest point in Kenya’s post-colonial period. Through the imposition and application of *finbo ideology*, there was effort to turn Kenyans into unthinking people with the thinking being left only to the president. This had the effect of making Kenyans collectively a *cheering crowd* doing its best to keep a safe distance from Kamiti. KANU was declared supreme over Parliament as it drifted close to communist parties whose hold on Europe was on the decline due to internal weaknesses and external pressures. As national institutions collapsed and repression increased as symbolized by the *mlolongo* fiasco, resistance to *finbo ideology* intensified and culminated in the *saba saba* confrontations that indicated that Kenyans had lost fear of government. *Saba Saba* was a turning point in the relationship between the public and those wielding political power. Like the communist parties in Europe that KANU had started resembling, internal and external factors forced an end to its political monopoly in 1991. This eliminated the worst period in post-colonial Kenya.

Yote yawezekana

Kenya’s lowest point was followed by fluctuating highs from 1991 to 2002 in which public involvement as well as competition for political office was the name of the game. Three elections; 1992, 1997, and 2002, would dominate various activities and political intrigues as KANU power barons sought novel ways of holding on to office while their opponents struggled to find a formula for undermining that novelty. Some of these intrigues were violent in nature, right from the form of political killings termed tribal clashes to others camouflaged in the garb of constitutional reforms. What was clear was that members of the political class did not want outsiders to assume leadership but they wanted to use these outsiders to enhance their particular positions. The friction between the political class and the outsiders, with a few of them being absorbed into the political class, is part of the exciting high that Kenya experienced in the decade of multi-party politics that ended with the ouster of KANU by NARC.

With political pluralism legalised, focus was on the coming multi-party elections of 1992 but little attention was paid to the flawed electoral system that Moi controlled. FORD split into FORD-Kenya led by Odinga and FORD-Asili led by Matiba because Odinga and Matiba could not agree on how to select a presidential candidate. Former Vice-President Kibaki created the Democratic Party, DP, as a

⁷² Hempstone, “Africa’s Tarnished Jewel,” p.55; Robert I. Rotberg, “African Democracy’s Twisting Path,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 30, 1992; Munene, “Diplomatic Collision Course,” p. 90.

third independent opposition force. Each of the opposition leaders hoped to be the next president since, they all believed, Moi was bound to lose the way Kenneth Kaunda had lost in Zambia. But Moi, who controlled the electoral machinery, appointed retired Justice Chesoni, to head the electoral commission. After the elections, held on December 29, 1992, Chesoni declared Moi the winner; those with television sets watched a swearing in ceremony that had not been announced.⁷³

Although Moi survived amidst acrimony, his regime was rescued by the unexpected phenomenon of FORD Asili MPs defecting to KANU, this weakened Kenneth Matiba, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and by Odinga's bitterness at being placed fourth in the official results which then destroyed the myth of his national popularity. This bitterness made Odinga abandon the opposition to join Moi, and to punish what he believed was a betrayal, mainly by Matiba. He had sought financial help from Hempstone to file cases against Matiba and Kibaki but Hempstone had turned him down⁷⁴ Thereafter, Odinga received Kamlesh Pattni's donation of two million shillings for Odinga's new project of filing court cases against FORD Asili MPs. The donation helped to deplete the number of FORD Asili Members of Parliament and, added to Moi induced defections, eventually enabled Odinga to snatch the title of the Leader of the Official Opposition from Matiba. In his capacity as Leader of the Official Opposition and chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, Odinga exonerated Pattni of charges related to the Goldenberg scandal and by the time of his death in January 1994, he was a hero in the *Kenya Times* for having "realised the folly of an opposition party working to antagonise the Government."⁷⁵

Not all defenders of KANU agreed with the positive evaluation of Odinga's worth, among these being Henry Mwanzi and William R. Ochieng'. Mwanzi accused Odinga of encouraging and enjoying Luo tribalism and of having "uncontrollable ambition to rule this country" failing which he created *Odingaism* through which he controlled the "Luo mentally and psychologically [as they] seceded from Kenya and lived in a world of their own-'Luoland'.... He chose for them who to elect." Mwanzi then called on the Luo to liberate themselves from Odingaism.⁷⁶ The call for Luo liberation from Odingaism was shared by Ochieng' who complained that Odinga had virtually enslaved the people of Yimbo and reacted angrily to those suggesting that Oburu Odinga succeed his father in parliament. He asserted that

⁷³ Macharia Munene, "Images of Kenya's Foreign Policy in The Media," Workshop on The Foreign Policy of Kenya: Issues and Prospects, August 27-29, 1997, USIU-Africa, Nairobi.

⁷⁴ Smith Hempstone, *Rogue Ambassador: An African Memoir* (Sewanee, Tennessee: University of the South Press, 1997), p. 314.

⁷⁵ Editorial, *The Kenya Times*, January 22, 1994.

⁷⁶ Henry Mwanzi, "Of the Luo and Odingaism," *Kenya Times*, February 16, 1994.

“Bondo constituency was not Jaramogi Oginga Odinga’s personal latifundia to be passed to his progeny.”⁷⁷ Voters in Bondo, however, chose Oburu Odinga.

Few people paid attention to Mwanzi and Ochieng but there was serious concern over Odinga’s cooperation that, had helped to divert attention from official violence, which became the norm. William Ole Ntimama was above the law as he orchestrated evictions and killings in Enoosupukia, indeed, Attorney General Amos Wako could not touch him.⁷⁸ Richard Leakey, secretary general of the unregistered SAFINA party, was beaten up by KANU Youth Wingers in Nakuru as government officials looked on. Nassir applauded the youth and, warned Leakey not to meddle in politics.⁷⁹ Moi rejected the idea of a level political playing field, noting that “Politics in Africa is not like football, deserving a level playing ground. Here, you try that and you will be roasted.”⁸⁰

While rejecting opposition demands for fairness, KANU, like other parties had to contend with political frictions. Within KANU, members called for elections in order to remove ‘passengers’ in party offices, and following Odinga’s death, FORD-Kenya split between the Raila and the Wamalwa factions. After Wamalwa won, Raila quit, joined the National Democratic Party, NDP, and became its leader. Ford-Asili split into Matiba and Shikuku factions and Shikuku emerged the winner. Kibaki successfully thwarted challenges in the Democratic Party but, the impression that it too was a fractured party, remained. In KANU, some members called for party elections that would remove ‘passengers’ in the party.⁸¹

The splits in political parties made the public to lose faith in the political class and in 1997, bestow legitimacy on the National Council Executive Committee (NCEC). This development scared the political class so much that it patched up internal disputes and came up with the Inter Parliamentary Party Group (IPPG) on minimum reforms and promises of constitutional overhaul after the elections. Its purpose, Kiraitu Murungi wrote, was to avoid a revolution. Having sidelined intruders into leadership, politicians went to elections in December 1997 and once again, Moi was declared the winner.⁸²

In Moi’s final term, 1998 to 2002, one notes a ‘crisis of transition’ on whether there would be a peaceful transfer of office. Moi started his last term violently with people in Laikipia, Njoro, and Molo being killed simply because people in these areas had voted against him. Curiously, Raila and Wamalwa reacted to the killings

⁷⁷ Times Reporter “Ochieng’: It’s Our Turn in Bondo,” *The Kenya Times*, January 26, 1994.

⁷⁸ Bill Berkeley, “An Encore for Chaos?” *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1996; see also reprint in *FINANCE*, March 31, 1996.

⁷⁹ Munene, *The Politics of Transition in Kenya*, p.21.

⁸⁰ *Daily Nation*, July 25, 1996.

⁸¹ Munene, *The Politics of Transition in Kenya*, p. 28.

⁸² Kiraitu Murungi, *In the Mud of Politics* (Nairobi: Acacia, 2000), pp. 78-80; Munene, *The Politics of Transition in Kenya*, pp. 60-63.

in the Rift Valley with silence because, they hoped for political rewards from Moi; Raila was rewarded by one of his men, Job Omino, being made deputy speaker of the National Assembly. This was the genesis of *Koperesen* (cooperation), a marriage of political expediency between KANU and NDP.⁸³ One of *Koperesen*'s first tasks was to deal with the happenings linked to the Ufungamano House where disillusioned people, led by religious bodies, had met and had decided to start collecting and collating views on constitutional change in Kenya.

Through *Koperesen*, a Raila led Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Review was created that forced through Parliament an Act constituting the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC), and proceeded to appoint 15 commissioners. To overcome the problems of credibility, the Attorney General, Amos Wako, disarmed critics by bringing in Yash Pal Ghai from Hong Kong as CKRC chairman; most prominent lawyers in Kenya had either been his students in law class or had read his writings on constitutionalism in Kenya. Ghai succeeded in merging the two rival constitutional processes into one big CKRC by convincing Moi to increase the number of commissioners by 12, and by persuading *Ufungamano* to nominate only 10 commissioners because, Moi had insisted on having an additional two. Although the CKRC remained primarily a KANU-NDP outfit, Ghai transformed it into a national institution by convincing the *Ufungamano* group to disband.⁸⁴

Koperesen hinged on the benefits that Moi and Raila could get but the best that they got was a short lived political marriage. For Moi, the crucial agenda was the removal of the two-term limit which he had imposed in 1992, while for Raila; it was the creation of the post of prime minister. Removing the two term limit would enable Moi to continue as president after 2002, while the post of prime minister would reward Raila with substantial political power. A campaign to carry this out was then mounted with intensity. In July 2000, *Kenya Times* suggested that the "Constitution ... be changed to allow anybody, President Moi included, to run for President if the people demand so."⁸⁵ Within a month, cabinet ministers started calling for the removal of the two term constitutional restriction, vowed to campaign for the scrapping of the two term limit, and claimed that Moi was

⁸³ Munene, *The Politics of Transition in Kenya*, pp.89-92.

⁸⁴ Martin Mutua, "Raila Shortlists Candidates," *East African Standard*, November 3, 2000; see stories between November 5 and November 17, 2000 in *East African Standard*, *Daily Nation*, *Kenya Times*; ⁸⁴ Prof. Henry Mwanzi, "Parliament Rises to the Occasion, takes Control of the Review Process," *Kenya Times*, Saturday, November 18, 2000; Peter Githinji, Letter to the Editor, "Raila Team Most Competent to Deliver," *Kenya Times*, November 18, 2000.

⁸⁵ Frank Ochieng', "How to Settle Debate over Moi's Candidacy in 2002 ... Let Kenyans Decide through Referendum," *Kenya Times*, Insight, Thursday, July 20, 2000, p. 16.

indispensable to Kenya.⁸⁶ In September 2000, KANU/NDP floated the idea of extending Moi's term and at the same time creating the post of prime minister.⁸⁷

The *East African Standard* joined in the fray when on April 1, 2001, Kwendo Opanga, a columnist called for debate on whether Moi should run for a third time.⁸⁸ Dominic Odipo, another *Standard* columnist, suggested that Moi was actually "grooming himself to take up the post."⁸⁹ William Ochieng chipped in, and claimed that, Americans had imposed the two-term limit through the IMF and World Bank.⁹⁰

One way to achieve this was to adopt the tactic of piecemeal constitutional amendments and the test for this method was the poorly drafted KACA Bill, the bill which was an attempt to fight corruption, required a two-thirds majority vote. Although Moi went to Parliament to vote, the Bill failed due to rebellion within the ranks of KANU and NDP. With the possibility of repealing the two-term limit diminishing, focus turned to the evolving political marriage that eliminated NDP as a party at Kasarani in March 2002. In that marriage, Vice-President George Saitoti and Secretary General Joseph Kamotho were sidelined, as they watched "mambo yanavioenda". The winners were Raila who replaced Kamotho as KANU secretary general, while Raila's man, Otieno Kajwang became secretary for legal and constitutional affairs. The posts of vice-chairman went to Kalonzo Musyoka, Musalia Mudavadi, Katana Ngala and most importantly, Uhuru Kenyatta.⁹¹

After the political marriage at Kasarani, attention turned to CKRC, with attempts to make it produce the desired results. Divisions within the commission, however, emerged in which some commissioners accused Ghai of trying to rush the process. In June 2003, for instance, a call for extending the life of the commission was quickly linked to the idea of extending the life of the Parliament and the presidency.⁹² Such an extension would provide for time to ensure that "people"

⁸⁶ Vincent Bartoo, "Stay on, Ministers Urge Moi," *Daily Nation*, Friday, August 18, 2000; See story in Kenya Times, August 28, 2000.

⁸⁷ Mukalo Kwayera, "Plot to have Prime Minister Exposed," *The People Daily*, Tuesday, September 5, 2000.

⁸⁸ Kwendo Opanga, "Should Moi Run Again or Should He Not? Discuss," *Sunday Standard*, April 1, 2001.

⁸⁹ Dominic Odipo, "Why This Succession Talk Gets Curiouser by the Day," *East African Standard*, Friday, April 13, 2001.

⁹⁰ William Ochieng', "Allow Moi to Decide Whether to Stand for Presidency," *Sunday Standard*, Commentary, April 15, 2001.

⁹¹ See different reports in *Daily Nation*, March 19-22, 2002; *East African Standard*, March 19-22, 2002.

⁹² Okech Kendo, "It's the Commissioners Who Ruined Their Case," *East African Standard*, April 19, 2001; Joe Kadhi, "Vested Interests Must Not Derail Ghai's Work," *East African Standard*, April 21, 2001.; Julius Wafula, "How Ghai Team was 'Highjacked' by Politicians," *East African Standard*, April 1, 2002; Ben Agina, "General Election Set for Next Year," *East African Standard*, May 29, 2002; Franklin Awori, "MPs Scheming to Extend Life of House, Says

demanded the removal of the two-term limit and the creation of the post of prime minister.⁹³ The effort backfired with, a hostile public demanding that, elections be held as scheduled and that the CKRC submit a constitutional draft, and not a constitution, within the time stipulated by the Act that created CKRC.⁹⁴ This public reaction doomed any hopes of extending Moi's rule by repealing the two term constitutional limit.

Attention once again shifted to Moi's political game, it was noted that although the political marriage at Kasarani was with Raila, Moi's eyes had long started roving towards Uhuru who had been receiving special political favours. Mark Too, a KANU nominated member conveniently resigned from parliament, Moi then nominated Uhuru and subsequently, made him Minister for Local Government. *Mungiki*, a militant group that, supposedly supported Uhuru, seemed to have the freedom to do anything, such that, when its members in Kariobangi clashed with the *Talibans* who reportedly were on Raila's side, the 'Talibans' were arrested but the *Mungiki* were left alone.⁹⁵ *Mungiki* freely took control of matatu terminals from which it collected money, and denounced Kibaki. When Uhuru told old men to forget leadership and vowed to crush them if they stood in his way, it appeared as if the *Mungiki* would be used to do the crushing.

This was particularly so when members of *Mungiki* were ferried to the streets of Nairobi, and in a display of their regalia of violence, they indicated support of Moi and Uhuru, and were even greeted by Moi with the one finger KANU salute.⁹⁶ They were also covered live on KBC broadcast displaying their attire in front of Moi, Uhuru and the KANU high command.⁹⁷ Politicians William Ruto and Julius Sunkuli pointed out that they did not want Moi to leave office but if he had to leave, then Kibaki should leave leadership to the younger generation; evidently, it was Uhuru they had in mind. All this, seemingly was to make it easy for Uhuru to move up in case Moi had to leave the presidency.

Donde," *Daily Nation*, May 27, 2002; David Mugonyi, "Raila Team Moves to Extend Parliament," *Daily Nation*, May 29, 2002; Lillian Juma, "Row Threatens CKRC Members Split Over Extension of Time," *Kenya Times*, April 2, 2002.

⁹³ Joe Kadhi, "None of the Young Turks Will Succeed Moi Shortly," *East African Standard*, March 30, 2002; Eric Otieno, "Give CKRC ample Time, Says Minister," *Kenya Times*, April 2, 2002; see also story "KANU Plans for the presidency," *Daily Nation*, May 22, 2002.

⁹⁴ Lee Muthoga, letter to the Editor, "Extending the Life of Parliament Would be Patently Illegal," *Daily Nation*, May 30, 2002; Editorial and stories, *East African Standard*, May 30, 2002; stories in *Daily Nation*, May 30 and May 31, 2002; story in *The People Daily*, May 30, 2002.

⁹⁵ Peter Mwangi Kagwanja, "Facing Mt. Kenya or Facing Mecca? The *Mungiki*, Ethnic Violence and the Politics of the Moi Succession in Kenya, 1987-2002," *African Affairs*, (2003), 102, pp. 45-47.

⁹⁶ "How City Demo was Organised," *The People Daily*, August 21, 2002.

⁹⁷ Emmanuel Ouko Commentary, "When a Phrase is Bereft of Its Sense by Mere Rhetoric," *The People Daily*, September 9, 2002.

Moi's choice of Uhuru as his 'Project' led to the disintegration of KANU as other claimants felt insulted. Disintegration became certain when Moi ruled Saitoti out of order, and dismissed Raila's ambitions in a derogatory manner; he rubbed it in by claiming that "KANU iko na wenyewe" who did not include Raila. The "wenyewe" that Moi probably had in mind included the Kiambu Mafia who, back in 1969, had reportedly vowed not to let *piki piki*, meaning the motor cycles in the presidential escort, cross the Chania River or to enter another tribe's territory. With Uhuru as the bait, DP patron Njenga Karume abandoned Kibaki in order to join Uhuru's bandwagon and received praises for agreeing to "serve the country under the guidance of President Moi"⁹⁸ as he calimed that if his people wanted power, "Mr Kenyatta is the candidate with the best chances to take us there." He preferred Uhuru, the Kiambu man, to Kibaki who had to cross the Chania River to go to his village in Othaya.⁹⁹ It appeared as if Moi wanted to return the *piki piki* to the *wenyewe* in Kiambu through Jomo's son.

This talk of *wenyewe* offended a lot of people, including Moody Awori, an assistant minister who resigned because he was excluded from the wenyewe club. "When we started complaining against President Moi campaigning for Mr Kenyatta," Awori explained, "we were told KANU has its owners. It looked like we were not part of those owners; we have left it to its owners."¹⁰⁰ Most important there, was Raila, who also resigned and was the most insulted by the "wenyewe" reference given that his followers believed that Moi was grooming him for the presidency. Raila was despondent after he was dumped given that; he had worked hard to gain Moi's favour only to be spurned. He had condemned Saitoti and Kamotho as spent forces in KANU and had advised Kibaki to forget the presidency; he had organized a rally at Kamkunji to demonstrate that he had a serious following that should not be ignored in political calculations. All this in the hope that Moi would let him run for the presidency on a KANU ticket if Moi was not himself a candidate.¹⁰¹ Raila was, therefore, desperate to regain his public credibility as a political fighter and as he later argued, "I would be better off as a sweeper or clerk under a NARC government than a prime minister under the Project."¹⁰² Raila had to appear like a fighter once Moi decided to impose Uhuru on KANU, as his "Project".

Raila then came out fighting, first within KANU as he led a rebellion, called the Rainbow coalition, comprising Raila, Saitoti, Mudavadi, Kalonzo, and Ngala. They

⁹⁸ Eliud Muring'uh, "Moi: Young Turks Have Come of Age," *East African Standard*, June 21, 2002.

⁹⁹ Njeri Rugene and Mburu Mwangi, "DP jolted as Karume Crosses Over to Uhuru," *Daily Nation*, Monday, September 2, 2002.

¹⁰⁰ Dennis Onyango, "Why New Political Force is a Major Threat to Ruling Party," *Sunday Nation*, October 27, 2002.

¹⁰¹ *Daily Nation*, September 17, 2002.

¹⁰² *Daily Nation*, October 29, 2002.

wanted to support one of the rebels, probably Saitoti, but changed their mind on determining that the KANU nomination process would not be fair. Moi successfully pressured Mudavadi and Ngala to abandon the rebellion; the two acquired a reputation for political cowardice and the impression stuck. The remaining rebels then decided to boycott the nomination process since to attend would be to legitimise electoral fraud and they became political heroes confronting Moi and his ‘project’ and as the popular Gidi Gidi Maji Maji hit song stated, they became *unbwogable*.

Two political groups were waiting to benefit from Raila’s rebellion. There was Simeon Nyachae’s FORD-Kenya and Mwai Kibaki’s NAK. Nyachae had disappointing up and down relations with Moi. Before the 1992 elections, he had bitterly complained of how Moi mistreated him but he surprised people by supporting KANU instead of the opposition and had been rewarded with a ministerial appointment. In between the elections, he had grumbled and was associated with an anti-Saitoti splinter group in KANU that Moi eventually ignored, only to endorse KANU at the 1997 elections. He was appointed Minister for Finance, not the expected vice-presidency, which remained vacant. Shortly thereafter, he became a rebel within KANU and gravitated towards FORD-People as his political vehicle. Given that his rebellion in KANU preceded that of Raila and, having spent a bit of money helping the Rainbow Coalition, and given that he was not Kikuyu like Kibaki and Uhuru, he expected the other KANU rebels to join him. He was disappointed and was subsequently not interested in opposition political unity.

Political unity is what marked the Kibaki camp, unity which came as a result of “tea” sessions between Kibaki, Wamalwa and Charity Ngilu which produced the National Alliance of Kenya, NAK, the alliance designated Kibaki as the presidential candidate. Kibaki became the “feel good” candidate and a force to reckon with.¹⁰³ This is what attracted the Raila rebels into Kibaki’s camp and so infuriated Nyachae. In leading his team into a charged rally at Uhuru Park, Raila announced “Kibaki Tosha”, this created a new political euphoria, turning a popular religious chant, into a political slogan, “Yote yawezekana, Bila Moi.” After that, the National Rainbow Coalition, NARC, was formed with Kibaki as the presidential candidate to oppose Moi’s “Project.”¹⁰⁴

NARC won the election amidst the fear of possible rigging; indeed, measures had been taken to anticipate fraud, including using mobile phones and Citizen Radio and Television as tools for relaying results and information to the public. Raila’s

¹⁰³ Macharia Munene, “The Kenyan 2002 Elections: The Road Travelled, The Lessons Learned,” in *Wajibu: A Journal of Social and Religious Concern*, Volume 18, Number 1-2, May-July 2003, p.12.

¹⁰⁴ *Daily Nation*, October 15, 2002; Macharia Munene, “Kibaki’s Moment in History: The Election of 2002 and Its Aftermath,” *East African Journal of Human Rights and Democracy* (EAJHRD), VOL.1, Number 1, 2003, pp. 71-89.

threat to march a million people into State House, if the wrong results were announced had a sobering effect.¹⁰⁵ In part, this was because there was a lot of emotion attached to the NARC campaign with thousands of volunteers determined to defeat Moi and his 'Project'. Such emotions benefited Kibaki, the captain in a football team that was capable of carrying on with the game even if the captain was injured, so that even when Kibaki was injured following a road accident, his popularity increased and translated into emotional outpouring that was intensified by blunders on the KANU side. This outpouring translated to votes that made Kibaki president even if he was on a wheel chair.

To his credit, Uhuru had the decency to admit defeat that ended speculations on what would happen.¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

A look at Kenya's political development from independence in 1963, to the present, reveals a pattern of socio-political fluctuations between optimism and disappointments. These come in chronological segments of differing durations. There was the euphoria of the 1960s, associated with independence, which was followed by the disappointments of Kenyatta's autocracy, in his last decade of rule. There was a political honeymoon period between 1978 and 1982, linked to the transition to Moi's presidency. The honeymoon ended as Moi imposed his *finbo* ideology in the 1980s, and turned Kenya into a political and economically bankrupt entity. This aroused public anger that led to a protracted struggle for a return to multi-party politics culminating with the removal of Moi from the presidency. As Kenya struggled to get out of its dependency predicament, it was confronted by the wrath of imperialism that wanted to ensure that Kenya does as ordered.

1963 to 1969 therefore, was a euphoric period of transition from colonialism to independence, dominated politically by Jomo Kenyatta. Within it was there political competition camouflaged as ideological and tribal feuds, to determine who should inherit Kenyatta's job after his expected death. First, was the rivalry between Mboya and Odinga that ended with Mboya sidelining Vice-president Odinga, who then formed KPU to compete politically with KANU. When, in 1968, it appeared as if Kenyatta was dying, friction within KANU led to a change in the constitution to ensure that Mboya did not manipulate his way into the presidency upon Kenyatta's death. The decade that had started on a patriotic optimism ended with mass oath-taking to stop the *piki piki* from crossing the River Chania or going to any

¹⁰⁵ *Daily Nation*, December 18, 2002.

¹⁰⁶ Sammy Wambua, "How Uhuru 'Scuttled' Plot to Rob Kibaki of Election Victory," *The East African*, Monday, January 6, 2003.

other part of the country, with the assassination of Mboya on the streets of Nairobi, and the banning of KPU, following riots in Kisumu.

Kenyatta's presidency of the 1970s, gradually turned repressive, with internal friction within the political class that led to political atrocities and attempts to undermine each other as Kenyatta's death once again became imminent. Those who had successfully organized a change of the constitution in 1968, to stop Mboya from influencing members of parliament to make him president, mounted a new but unsuccessful, change the constitution movement in 1976. They wanted to return to the status quo ante-1968 in which the vice-president did not automatically succeed the dead president, but they had not counted on Vice-President Moi's political craftiness and good preparation. Moi was able to deflate the new change the constitution movement with one of his allies, Njonjo, decreeing that it was treason to imagine the death of a president, and when, indeed Kenyatta died in August 1978, Moi was ready to assume power.

The transition from Kenyatta to Moi, 1978-1982, was a political honeymoon in which Moi's concern was to be accepted as Kenyatta's political heir as he proclaimed the slogan of *Nyayo* to mean that he would follow in Kenyatta's political footsteps. The media went out of their way to convince the public to accept the new president, some of them even toned down their attacks on government failures. Moi, therefore, had started with a lot of goodwill; he seemed to strike the right note as he released those detained by Kenyatta's regime. His reported campaign against corruption or *magendo*, that had become rampant in Kenyatta's final years, also won him accolades. He reciprocated Odinga's crucial support among the Luo by appointing Odinga to a parastatal office. This high, however, was short-lived as national institutions started experiencing serious problems.

Moi also wanted to have his own imprint and this became clear after 1982, when he imposed the *finbo ideology*. In the process, Kenya deteriorated from being a neo-colony into a post-modern colony that was answerable to an assortment of multilateral institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, acting on behalf of the master states. This, is what happened, because, Kenya had sunk deep into the dependency syndrome right at the time when the master states were readjusting their relationships with client states such as Kenya by reducing bilateral dealings, while stressing the role of multilateral institutions as new instruments of international control. As this was happening, Moi imposed his will on Kenyans and ordered them not to think because he was the only one supposed to think; those who tried to think and to question Moi's policies and activities were locked up in prisons or detained, thus mental stagnation became a national norm. The economy declined and national institutions collapsed with universities being intellectually emasculated, while the legislature and the judiciary became rubberstamps of presidential whims. The Legislature, in 1982, changed the constitution to make Kenya a one party state in order to stop Odinga from forming

another party. On its part, the judiciary declared that it did not operate in a political vacuum and became an effective instrument of *finbo ideology*. Kenya sunk into political and economic bankruptcy as unquestioning obedience to Moi's every wish became the rule and yet, Moi was increasingly answerable to foreign forces.

The tyranny of the 1980s generated its own counterforce as the public seemingly took the initiative from the political class, demanded change and a return to multi-party politics in Kenya. The public lost fear of government as the political space opened up due to internal and external pressures. In a multi-party setting, Moi was twice declared the winner after flawed elections and this encouraged those disappointed with the declarations to reexamine the constitutional structure. Demands for constitutional overhaul appeared to threaten the political class whose members then concocted the IPPG to undermine the NCEC and enacted the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) Act in such a way as to ensure that they control the final outcome of any national undertaking. Moi did not want to leave office and when it became inevitable, he sought to perpetuate his rule through the "Uhuru Project" but it failed with Kenyans chanting *yote yawezekana* as they voted for Kibaki on his third attempt as Kenya's president.

Mwai Kibaki was sworn in as president while in a wheel chair, determined to make Kenya regain its respect in both the domestic and the international arena; however, he seemed to have incurred the anger of imperial powers. Kibaki appears not to have anticipated the political and global obstacles that would come his way, while some of the obstacles were inherent in his style of operations and in the people he appointed, others were imposed by the forces of post-modern colonialism that were equally determined to tell Kenya what it should do because it had become a client state. The challenge to the Kibaki regime, therefore, has been to balance a clear vision of where Kenya should be economically as a player in the international arena, and the demands of a growing democracy being guided by the *international community* to have "civilized relationship" with colonialistic powers. In the process, Kibaki's Kenya aroused and continues to bear *the wrath of imperialism*.

Chapter Eight

The Print Media and Political Change in Kenya, 1958-1998

Introduction

The euphoria of Uhuru (freedom), 1958-1968

The euphoria of *uhuru* can be traced to the success of the Mau Mau War's, in forcing the colonial state to make political concessions to supposedly moderate Africans, who would be forever grateful to the government, and act as a buffer zone between African political demands, and colonial authorities. An election had been organised for Africans in March 1957, using formulae designed to keep out the Kikuyu, and disqualify 'extremists' but, most of the candidates viewed as government endorsed lost.¹ Although the election successfully rigged out Eliud Mathu, the eight men who won including Mboya and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga of Nyanza, a former member of the banned KAU, did not play their expected roles properly although, Mboya had become a media favourite.

Mboya was tailor made for British desire to find a substitute to Kenyatta's leadership among non-Kikuyu Africans, and for American, Cold War interests. Newsman, Smith Hempstone, later American ambassador to Kenya, noted how the British built up Mboya in order "to create a new and, hopefully, more pliant leader".² For that reason, he was promoted as a rare being among Africans³ and then sent to Oxford where Dame Margery Perham adopted and promoted him as the African spokesman on Kenyan issues. She had advised him to write a pamphlet on Kenya, arranged for the Fabian Colonial Bureau to publish, *The Kenya Question:*

¹ Gikonyo Kiano, "Victory for Democracy, Elections in Kenya", *Africa Today*, Vol. 4, No. 3, May-June 1957, pp. 3-6; Richard P. Hunt, "Kenya May Face Political Strife", *The New York Times*, Sunday, March 17, 1957.

² Hempstone newsletters to Rogers, SH-25 and SH 26, June 23 and June 26, 1957; George Bennett, *Kenya A Political History: The Colonial Period* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 141.

³ James Bury, "Trade Union Movement in Kenya", *Africa Today*, May-June 1955, p. 17.

An African Answer,⁴ and then wrote a "Foreword" pointing out that Mboya was "not a Kikuyu" and praised him for having "a clear head and a quiet, restrained manner."⁵ To her, Mboya was the new, young and educated leader that Kenya Africans "desperately" needed.⁶

Through Perham, the Africa Bureau invited Mboya to be the African spokesman in a May 1956, conference on the crisis in Kenya, and the American media then adopted him. He hobnobbed with power brokers in a conference on Kenya as a key speaker⁷ subsequent to which, Kennett Love of *The New York Times* asserted that, Mboya "had become the chief spokesman of Kenyan Africans."⁸ Other American media joined in promoting Mboya, *Africa today*, particularly published an article by Mboya on trade unionism in Kenya in the March-April 1956 issue, giving him exposure in the American liberal and labor union circles.⁹ His first visit to the United States in August 1956 therefore had been widely covered, and his *The Kenya Question* became a best-seller. *The New York Times* described him as a soft-spoken smiling man" who brought to the American people "a message for African freedom and democracy."¹⁰ Americans had liked his message and so they ensured that he had enough money to win the March 1957 election because, argued George Houser, he was "basically a product of the democratic upsurge in Africa today."¹¹

The hope that Kenyatta would be forgotten with the emergence of younger Africans led by Mboya was not fulfilled because, the media attempt to make Mboya appear as if he was leader of the Africans ruffled other elected politicians. Odinga muddied the political waters in June 1958, in the Legislative Council insisting that, Kenyatta and his fellow prisoners at Lokitaung were the true leaders of the Africans. Odinga essentially was unhappy with the way the media made Mboya look as if he was the leader of the Africans and so he pulled the rag from under Mboya's feet by reminding the colonial state that Kenyatta was the recognized leader. Subsequently, it became prudent for all African politicians to

⁴ Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963), pp.50-51; David Goldsworthy, *Mboya: The Man Kenya Wanted to Forget* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1982), pp.57-60.

⁵ Mergery Perham, "Foreword", in Tom Mboya, *The Kenya Question: An African Answer* (London: Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1956), pp. 1-2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁷ The Africa Bureau, London, "Report of the Conference on Questions affecting Kenya and Britain", 12th May, 1956 in the Livingstone Hall, London. Document in the African Studies Library, Boston University.

⁸ Kennett Love, "Labor Chief Warns British of Violence Over Policies of White-Domination", *The New York Times*, May 13, 1956, p. 26.

⁹ Tom Mboya, "Kenyan Trade Unions Fight for Freedom", *Africa Today*, March-April 1956, pp. 2-5.

¹⁰ *The New York Times*, August 19, 1956, p. 9.

¹¹ George M. Houser, Letter to the Editor on "Mboya's Politics", *The New York Times*, May 11, 1958.

demand Kenyatta's release at every opportune moment.¹² For instance, October 20th 1959, the anniversary of Kenyatta's arrest was turned into a national holiday as 5,000 Africans boycotted public transport, refrained from smoking and drinking, and marched in Nairobi's streets chanting Kenyatta's praises and demanding that he be released.¹³ This exercise in self-denial, on 'Kenyatta Day', was repeated in 1960¹⁴ and thus started what in Kenya would eventually become a public holiday.

The pressure, mounted by uncooperative Africans with their mass actions of 1959, forced the government to call for the first round table conference in January-February 1960 to determine the future relationship between the government in London, in Nairobi, and the future of the settlers. This was the Lancaster House Conference in which, the American and British media outdid themselves in portraying Mboya as the leader of the Africans, and he appeared to be, from the way he had organized for Thurgood Marshall, a black American lawyer who had successfully argued for desegregation of schools in the United States, to be the advisor to the African delegation.

While Marshall viewed his involvement as evidence of a growing awareness in the United States about African problems, an opportunity to expand international contacts for black Americans, and a chance to visit Africa, his statements that Africans were fed up with colonialism¹⁵ angered the settlers in Kenya and their media. These, considered him to be an ignorant irritant, tolerated as a concession to Africans.¹⁶ A District Officer in Kiambu went to the extent of stopping him from attending a meeting of African delegates in his advisory capacity because his name did not appear as a participant.¹⁷

Such developments revived Kenyatta's name, they increased the political assertiveness and visibility of the Africans and made the print media furious. At the time, the mainstream print media: *The East African Standard*, the *Kenya Weekly News*, and the *Sunday Post*, catered for colonial and settler interests. None of them took a pro-African position in the struggle for independence; they instead tried to ridicule the African politicians. The *Kenya Weekly News* was in the forefront of the anti-African crusade, it was particularly annoyed by Mboya's political activities

¹² Odinga remarks on "Convicts at Lakitaung and Elsewhere", 26th and 27th June, 1958, *Kenya Legislative Council Debates: Official Report, Volume LXXVI, 1958 Second Session*, pp. 2402-2403, 2406-2408; Odinga Odinga *Not Yet Uhuru; The Autobiography of Oginga Odinga* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), pp. 156-162.

¹³ Leonard Ingalls, "Police Break Up Rally in Nairobi", *New York Times*, October 21, 1959; *Kenya Weekly News* October 23, 1959, p. 9, and October 30, 1959, p. 9.

¹⁴ *The New York Times*, October 21, 1960; John W. Richards, "The Enigma of Jomo Kenyatta", *The New Leader*, December 26, 1960, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵ Walter H. Waggoner, "Negroes' Lawyer on World Stage", *The New York Times*, Friday, January 22, 1960, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Kenya Weekly News*, January 22, 1960, p. 6.

¹⁷ *The New York Times*, Monday, January 11, 1960, p. 5.

and international following which it wanted curtailed. In April 1959, its editor complained of the existence of European political bankruptcy in Kenya which had “led to the decline of the repute of the European community overseas, and more especially in London. Today there is only one man in Kenya who is widely known as a political figure in the United Kingdom or the United States—Mr. Tom Mboya. By clever and effective publicity, by press conferences and by television Mr. Mboya is known to millions and the impression which they gain from his speeches in London is very different from his speeches at Makadara and elsewhere in Africa.”¹⁸

But once it was realised that African political activists could not be stopped, the media started devoting resources to creating a type of European leadership that they believed would be acceptable not only to the Africans and Asians, but also to the outside world. It was in the effort to look for a European alternative to the likes of Tom Mboya, that Michael Blundell was brought into the picture as the saviour of settler interests. To counter the popularity of Mboya’s crusade for independence, *Kenya Weekly News*, called for the promotion of a European who would offer fresh leadership, acceptable to the outside world, and to Africans and Asians. Such a man, according to the editor, was Michael Blundell who had just resigned as Minister for Agriculture in order to devote himself to a new policy on Kenya. Blundell would help repair “the damage to the European cause and to Kenya” by attracting the support of the European community as well as that of “sound and moderate elements of the other communities which comprise the people of Kenya.” Blundell, therefore, offered “a chance to justify European claims to leadership in Kenya.”¹⁹ The image being created was that Blundell was a liberal and could speak with authority on Kenyan issues.

When it became clear that the tactic of creating a European liberal leader as Kenya’s saviour would not stop the momentum for independence, there was anger towards those who appeared to support the African demands. An editorial in the *East African Standard* of January 1, 1960, raised the possibility of the Europeans rejecting any agreement reached in the planned Lancaster House Conference in London on the future of Kenya. “What has proved acceptable to Asians and Europeans elsewhere is not necessarily agreeable in Kenya ... If political turns are as abrupt as to endanger the economy, then concessions made to appease strident nationalism will surely defeat their own purpose by shaking economic stability.”²⁰ The *Kenya Weekly News* was also furious at those who encouraged African nationalists and so, reacted angrily in December 1959, to the comment by the British Labour Party that 1960 was to be the year of Africa. “Clearly,” wrote the editor, “the Party are determined to provoke trouble and to become a more

¹⁸ Editorial, “A Policy for Kenya,” *Kenya Weekly News*, Friday, April 3, 1959, p.6.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Editorial, “The Challenging Sixties,” *East African Standard*, January 1, 1960, p.8.

awkward nuisance than ever, in the field of colonial policy.”²¹ At the end of the conference, however, it became clear that there was no stopping African rule and African leaders returned to Kenya and decided to form the Kenya African National Union (KANU) as a vehicle for demanding independence.

In addition, the failure to impose Blundell as the acceptable white liberal to lead Kenya into a multi racial self-government forced the settlers to hatch the strategy of luring moderate African leaders and elite’s to serve European interests. This strategy was the “cooking up” of the *majimbo* (regional autonomy) , an idea, which was planted in the heads of those tribes that presumably supported the settlers interests against the Mau Mau War. In the forefront of this “cook up” were Michael Blundell, Reggie Alexander, and Wilfred Havelock, who suddenly transformed the white settlers into a small tribe, and then went on out to appeal for support from other small tribes. They created an alternative party to KANU and called it the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) with leaders Ronald Ngala as president, Masinde Muliro as Vice President, and Daniel Arap Moi as the party chairman. Havelock, in July 1994, explained what the settler leaders had done: “We realised that ‘white power’ was at an end when Britain committed itself to granting independence to Kenyans. We realised then that whites would be a very small minority ... We also realised that other peoples would be in the same situation, and with them, we advocated a regional system to protect the smaller tribes from domination and exploitation by the larger, more powerful groups”²²

In leading ‘small tribes’ against ‘big tribes’, the settlers had the support of the mainstream media, in the effort to discredit KANU. The *Sunday Post* led the way in attacking KANU in stories and syndicated columns. On January 7, 1962, for instance, the *Sunday Post* editorial accused KANU leader Jomo Kenyatta, recently released from prison, of struggling to hide “details of the appalling mess which exists within the political party which he leads.” It claimed that Kenyatta was gagging the press with “his incessant use of the expression, ‘No comment’.”²³ In the same issue of the *Sunday Post*, columnist Narain Singh, described Kenyatta as incapable of running a Nairobi City Council department. In contrast, Narain Singh wrote, “the courage and initiative displayed by the diminutive, yet dynamic, Mr Musa Amalemba ... is beyond praise.”

He concluded by asserting that it was “futile to expect the overwhelming majority of the people of Kenya to think and act in terms of Kenya yet.”²⁴ On its part, the *East African Standard*’s hostility toward people associated with KANU went to the

²¹ Editorial, “Africa Year,” *Kenya Weekly News*, Friday December 25, 1959, p.6.

²² Wilfred B. Havelock, Letter to the Editor, “Of Majimboism at Independence,” *Daily Nation*, Thursday, July 28, 1994, p.7.

²³ Editorial, “KANU AND THE PUBLIC,” *The Sunday Post*, January 7, 1962, p.4.

²⁴ Nairain Sing, “The Tribes could be pillars of Kenya Democracy,” *The Sunday Post*, January 7, 1962, p.8.

extent of censoring the distribution of *Mau Mau Detainee*, a book written by J.M. Kariuki in 1963 and published by Oxford University Press because, it considered the book to be defamatory.²⁵

The Nation

The hostility of the mainstream print media to African demands for independence made African readers to look for alternatives in the form of small, politically oriented publications, sponsored by political parties and figures and most important, in the form of the *Nation Newspapers* which was founded in 1960 by the Aga Khan. Politicians who started their own press included Tom Mboya, one of his reporters was young Joe Kadhi, but they could hardly make a dent in the colonial print media. The dent was made by the Aga Khan's decision to start a newspaper that would openly side with African aspirations and thus added vigour to political reporting in Kenya. The *Daily Nation* and its sister publications, the *Sunday Nation* and *Taifa Leo* (Kiswahili version of the *Daily Nation*), became the first alternative press to attract public attention and readership partly due to the way news was packaged in ordinary language that people could understand.

In contrast to the *Sunday Post*, which seemingly went out of its way to support KADU and denigrate KANU, *Sunday Nation* had a columnist who appeared to root for KANU and find a lot of faults with KADU. This was Paul Pry, who considered the KADU opposition meaningless and its leaders as lost and misleading their followers. Regional assemblies, he believed, were bogus trappings. Pry advised Moi and Towett to stop misleading the Kalenjins and "ask themselves where obdurate opposition is leading both themselves and their people, the answer was plain – it had already led the Kalenjin into the national political wilderness."²⁶ The *Nation* appeared to have anticipated and heeded Mboya's call for the press to give the new KANU government a chance to prove that their initial fears about an African government were unfounded. He had noted in September 1963, "for many months before the elections, British and local press had expressed concern about the future of Kenya" and that three months after the election it had been proved that Kenyatta's government had restored confidence and stability in Kenya.²⁷

Further, the *Nation Newspapers* recruited a crop of African commentators and newsmen who would later dominate the print media and the academia, to start with, there was James Ngugi whose *Sunday Nation* column, "As I See It," occasionally commended the leaders and at other times raised doubts about the direction that the country was taking. On February 17, 1963, for instance, while commenting on the Kenya-Somali border, he wondered whether, with "the young Kenya nation ... not

²⁵ Africa Digest, August 1963, Vol. XI, No.1, p.11.

²⁶ Paul Pry, "The Bankrupt Policy of the Opposition," *Sunday Nation*, September 8, 1963, p.6.

²⁷ Story on Mboya's appeal, *Sunday Nation* September 8, 1963 p.2.

even hatched out of the egg,” the Northern Frontier was to become a kind of Kashmir. He then went on to commend Kenyatta’s wisdom: “I liked what Kenyatta said at the conference in Moshi; he joined hands with President Nyerere to warn against the automatic use of slogans or being too concerned with a fixation about imperialism, without positively defining the tasks facing the challenge of nation building.”²⁸ By September 1, 1963, Ngugi was no longer praising Kenyatta, but was instead, asking leaders to be transparent in their policies as he noted that Kenyans were bewildered by the talk of federation because it was not properly explained. He wrote: “the mass of the people have trusted their leaders to find out what is best for the country. But they would like to know where and how they are being led.”²⁹ Ngugi left journalism, to concentrate on teaching, as he became more disillusioned with the Kenyatta whose wisdom he had earlier praised. It is interesting that up to 1969, Ngugi still believed there was, in Kenya, “a degree of an open society, which is not appreciated enough. A lot of books with conflicting ideas are allowed to circulate in Kenya, though we have also banned a good number. Also, there is a degree of free speech which I think is lacking in other countries in Africa.”³⁰ He later adjusted his name from James Ngugi to Ngugi wa Thiong’o as he became fixated on imperialism and in his writings started using the same slogans that he had praised Kenyatta for condemning. His best books along the anti-imperialist line were, *Petals of Blood*, and *Devil on the Cross* in which he censured the neo-colonial Kenya government for neglecting and supposedly supporting the exploitation of the poor.³¹

Other Africans such as Hilary Ng’weno, George Githii, Boaz Omori, Philip Ochieng, and Joe Kadhi, started making their names in the *Nation*. Hilary Ng’weno, recently returned from the United States in 1962 was by 1964, editor of the *Nation*. He quit the *Nation*, in 1966, and eventually went back to college to receive journalistic training at Harvard and Brandeis, he then rejoined the *Nation* as a Sunday columnist in 1968. When Ng’weno first left the *Nation*, he was replaced as editor by another budding journalist, George Githii. Githii first attracted public attention in 1966 after Oginga Odinga defected from KANU to form Kenya People’s Union (KPU), when he ran a series of articles on the meaning of African Socialism in which he essentially defended Kenyatta’s position as opposed to that of Odinga.³² It was Githii, as editor in Chief of the *Nation* Newspapers, who displayed the political power of the *Nation* Newspapers when in 1974, he

²⁸ James Ngugi, “As I See It: Kenya too has her border problems,” *Sunday Nation*, February 17, 1963, p.4.

²⁹ James Ngugi, “As I See It: Isn’t it time the public were asked about Federation?,” *The Daily Nation*, September 1, 1963, p. 31.

³⁰ On the Carpet, James Ngugi Talks to Peter Darling. *Sunday Nation*, March 16, 1998, p. 15.

³¹ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Petals of Blood* (London: Heinemann, 1977); and *Devil on the Cross* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1982).

³² George Githii, 7 part series on Marx and African Socialism, *Sunday Nation*, February to April, 1966.

successfully used that medium to campaign for his friend, Johnstone Muthiora, against Njoroge Mungai, for the Dagoreti Parliamentary seat. Githii quit the *Nation* to go to school in England, and his place as editor was taken over by Boaz Omari who had distinguished himself as the editor of *Taifa Leo*.

Ng'weno, Githii, and Omori, later joined by Philip Ochieng and Joe Kadhi, were part of the new crop of African journalists who became well known after independence and helped to shape the image of the *Nation* as a credible and independent newspaper. Their penchant for well argued criticisms and praises of government policy attracted the attention of a growing Kenyan public. Ng'weno, for instance, captured imagination as the first regular African columnist for the *Sunday Nation* in 1968, where he occasionally commented on corruption and freedom of the press. His comment on corruption as well as other articles in the press might have driven Vice-President Daniel arap Moi to complain that there was too much talk of corruption in the press which he believed was not good for a young country like Kenya. Ng'weno praised the *Nation* for leading the crusade against corruption and urged the government "to sacrifice those few among them whose corrupt practices tend to mar the image of the Government for such people, are a liability, not only to the Government but to the nation as a whole."³³ Moi's reported reaction was to complain that, as he was quoted, "... in certain sections of the press, as well as in Parliament, it has recently become fashionable to make sanctimonious reference to or advance vague accusations about bribery and corruption in Kenya's public life." Such allegations, Moi believed, undermined the morale of a young nation like Kenya."³⁴

Philip Ochieng, a product of the 1959 student airlift to the United States which Mboya had helped to organise joined the *Nation* in 1966. He became a regular columnist for the *Sunday Nation* in 1968, and contributed critical articles that occasionally pricked the government. His commentaries at that time appeared to be reasonable although, he spent a lot of time mocking government officials, ranging from President Jomo Kenyatta, down to ordinary bureaucrats. In one of those analyses, after Kenyatta appointed Taita Toweett, Minister for Education, he wrote a mocking column dedicated to "My Dear Taita" in which he congratulated Towett for his "appointment by the governor of this Territory, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, as the new Chief of the Department of Education."³⁵ He also accused Moi of adopting a big brother mentality towards the press when Moi said that there was press freedom only to contradict himself by saying that the press and the government cannot differ in principle. He wrote: "It is like big brother telling little brother 'You have freedom to say what you want to say, except that it won't be necessary, for I have

³³ Hilary Ng'weno, "Commentary on a Menace no-one wants to talk about, Corruption: should the press be given the right to root it out." *Sunday Nation*, January 21, 1968, pp.4-5.

³⁴ The Week in Kenya," *Sunday Nation*, January 28, 1968, p.8.

³⁵ Philip Ochieng, "Taita Towett Receives top Secret Letter," *The Sunday Nation*, January 4, 1970, p.6.

made up my mind that you have no cause to disagree. I allow you to talk except that you must not talk, because I said it for you.”³⁶ For that comment, he was lambasted by James Osogo, then Minister for Information and Broadcasting as well as Peter Gachathi, Permanent Secretary in the same ministry. Osogo, in a letter to the editor that the *Sunday Nation* allocated a whole page, took exception to Ochieng’s questioning of Moi’s sincerity.³⁷

Another budding journalist who made a name in the *Nation* was Joe Kadhi. Kadhi had started his journalistic pupilage by associating with prominent politicians such as Tom Mboya in the last few years of colonialism in Kenya. Before joining the *Nation*, he had worked as a reporter and editor of political publications including , *Sauti ya KANU*, *Mfanyi Kazi*, *Sauti ya Mwafrika*, and the *Nationalist of Tanganyika*. When Mboya helped to found the *East African Journal*, Kadhi was an editor. After 1965, Kadhi moved to the *East Africa Standard* and finally to the *Nation* in 1968. He became famous for his Sunday column: *Joe Kadhi asks why?* Later, he served as the managing editor of the *Nation* newspapers.³⁸

The impression the *Nation* Newspapers gave was that they catered for the interests of Kenyans as opposed to the *East African Standard*, which was solidly identified with the settlers and in defence of colonialism. The coming of independence created a kind of elitism with Africans who acquired new positions of power and wealth, not available to them before. A kind of snobbery developed in which those aspiring to be elite’s or to be hired would feign to read the *East African Standard* only to turn to the *Nation* when their guard was down. The fact that the *Nation*, despite its initial heavy reliance on expatriate editors, commentators and correspondents, appeared to have more articulate Africans writing for it than the *East African Standard*, reinforced this impression. By the time, Joe Kadhi was making a name as a columnist, earlier mainstream newspapers such as the *Sunday Post* and *Kenya Weekly News* had ceased to exist because their views were irrelevant to an independent Kenya. The *East African Standard* managed to adjust itself to the new political environment but it did not retain its pre-eminence. In the process, the *Nation* Newspapers had become not only part of the mainstream; it had actually become the mainstream by eclipsing the *East African Standard* in terms of circulation in Kenya and in East Africa. Its masthead, *the Newspaper that Serves the Nation*, as a source of news had become a truism.

³⁶ Philip Ochieng, “The Kenya Press—We Must Agree to Disagree,” *Sunday Nation*, March 23, 1969.

³⁷ Philip Ochieng “A Timid Press Reaping the Profit of Fear”, *Sunday Nation*, March 30, 1969, p.6; James Osogo’s Letter to the Editor, “Its Quite Clear There is no Control,” *Sunday Nation*, March 30, 1969, p.11.

³⁸ Joe Kadhi, “Joe Kadhi Asks Why” columns in the *Sunday Nation*, from 1970; For background on Kadhi’s journalistic pupilage see Introductory remarks by M. Medard and Francois Serbu to Lecture Given by Mr. Joe Kadhi.

By 1968, therefore, the scenario for the print media in Kenya was different from what it had been in 1958. Settler and colonial interests had dominated news in the then mainstream media of the *East African Standard*, the *Sunday Post*, and the *Kenya Weekly News* in the five years prior to independence in December 1963. A contrast to this line of presenting news emerged in 1960 with the establishment of the *Nation* as an alternative media. The *Nation* had captured the nationalist mood and had thereby attracted wide readership as a reliable source of news. As the *Sunday Post* and the *Kenya Weekly News* ceased to exist and the *East African Standard* lost to the *Nation* the prominence of being the authoritative newspaper, the *Nation* became the symbol of mainstream newspapers. The alternative had become the mainstream.

Print media and Kenyatta's last decade, 1968-1978

More than being a source of information, the *Nation* had become the pivotal media, which could sway political fortunes. By the 1970s, the *Nation* was the mainstream newspaper together with the *East African Standard*, the difference between the two however was not that clear given that reporters and editors tended to shift from one daily to the other. What was more, the collapse of the *Kenya Weekly News* and the *Sunday Post*, by 1970, had left the dailies as the conveyors of news and opinion, most of which was becoming extremely critical of the government. Although the honeymoon that the media had seemingly given Kenyatta's administration disappeared as his government was accused of tribalism, repression, and all sorts of misdeeds, these media were on balance, favourable to Kenyatta's regime. Odinga's political defection and the subsequent formation of the Kenya Peoples Union had been popular news which did not always portray KANU and Kenyatta in flattering terms but these portrayals remained the only source of news in the print media given that the demise of the *Sunday Post* and the *Kenya Weekly News* had deprived the country of a more diverse weekly secular print media.

The *Nation* proved itself to be a veritable power that could guide and misguide the readers. Under the editorship of George Githii, the *Nation* was reputedly instrumental in the 1974 general election when it actively campaigned against Njoroge Mungai in the Dagoreti Constituency in favour of Johnstone Muthiora. Its graphic portrayal of Muthiora as having large crowds in a political rally, in contrast to Mungai's tiny following, had the effect of depicting Mungai as a loser before he lost in the real election. The danger was that this evident power to persuade could be misused; this was actually the case in 1975, following the political killing of Josiah Mwangi Kariuki, better known to the public as JM. The *Nation* claimed that JM was in Zambia, and therefore lost a lot of credibility when JM's body was actually found in Ngong, the body had been doused with acid and later transported to the city mortuary as an unidentified corpse. The perception created was that, the *Nation* had allowed itself, because of its influence in the country, to mislead the

public. It had become not only the mainstream paper; it also appeared to be playing the role of the court paper.

While the *Nation* appeared to play the role of the court paper, a religious weekly, arose, published by the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCKK) and called *Target*, it occasionally rubbed other media as well as those in authority the wrong way. One of its best known initial editors, Henry Okullu, later became the Anglican Bishop of Maseno South. Okullu aroused the wrath of the *Nation's* editors in 1968 when he accused the press, with the exception of *Target*, of being corrupt. In the same breath, a *Sunday Nation*, editorial pointed out, Okullu "then suggested that if someone wanted something printed, he could sent the item to a reporter, enclosing some money in the envelope," Such suggestions, the editorial went on, "indicates amazing ignorance on the part of this official." It described Okullu's attack on the press as "unethical and unjustified" as it asked Okullu to "withdraw his allegations and apologise for the affront to many men and women who are dedicated to their calling; and for harming the reputation of an institution which plays a major role in the protection of democracy and ... of religion."³⁹

In 1975, *Target*, also hired the services of a journalistic gypsy, Philip Ochieng, who in 1976 incurred the anger of the government by questioning Kenya's support for the Israeli raid on Entebbe in an article titled: "a nation of sheep". As a result, he became a victim of the growing autocracy in the government and spent a few days at the Shauri Moyo Police Station and was released without charge.⁴⁰ *Target*, despite its occasional attraction to controversy, remained essentially on the fringe and eventually collapsed.

There was therefore, a weekly void, which was neatly filled by Hilary Ng'weno's decision to start a weekly news magazine which became the new alternative press. Having done his journalistic pupilage at the *Nation*, Ng'weno had learnt to measure the readers pulse and, with Sarah Elderkin as his editorial assistant, he founded *The Weekly Review* in February 1975; Horace Awori and Philip Ochieng served briefly as assistant editors, helping to package the magazine as a source of a whole week's news compressed in a few pages. He initially relied on borrowing international stories from the *New York Times* correspondents, but later he started recruiting local writers who, by June 1979, included Peter Kareithi, Margaretta wa Gacheru, Mbataru wa Ngai, Ben Omoro, Blamuel Njururi, and Absalom Mutere; people who would later make their names in the world of journalism.⁴¹ With their contributions, *The Weekly Review* began to acquire a reputation as a purveyor of well thought opinion and news interpretation. It became must reading by power brokers,

³⁹ Editorial, "On Press Corruption," *Sunday Nation*, January 28, 1968, p.4.

⁴⁰ Philip Ochieng, *I Accuse the Press: An Insider's View of the Media and Politics in Africa* (Nairobi: ACTS Press, 1992), pp. 34-37.

⁴¹ For a list of editors and writers associated with the *Weekly Review* from 1975 to 1979, see the credit pages of different issues of the *Weekly Review*.

intelligentsia and those who wanted to know about Kenya, whether they were in Kenya, or abroad. Ng'weno's success made the *Weekly Review* part of the mainstream and appeared to complement the *Nation* as far as the readers were concerned. It also neatly fitted the changing times especially after Kenyatta died and Vice-President Daniel arap Moi became president. Moi, the president, and Ngweno, the publisher was attracted to each other.

The press and the evolution of Moi's fimbo ideology, 1978-1988

In August 1978, a major news event took place in Kenya when President Kenyatta died and Daniel arap Moi, then the vice-president, became president. This former chairman of the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) is so politically astute that he had early on learned to advance his position by ingratiating himself to those holding power. He, by 1955, had attracted the attention of the colonial government which appointed him to the Legislative Council where he appropriately commended the benevolence of British colonialism and colonial officials as he asked for more responsibility to be given to Africans. In February 1956, he said: "When I look back over the history of the African district councils, I cannot but recognise how much more Africans owe to her Majesty's Government – administrators who have done so much in the darkest years – days when Africans were in the dark, and now have come to see the light."⁴²

He had then followed Blundell, Alexander, and Havelock to KADU in an effort to derail KANU's nationalist momentum but when that effort failed, and Kenya became independent under Kenyatta and KANU, he helped to dismantle KADU in 1964. Kenyatta noticed Moi and, it is interesting that of all the KADU officials, he picked on Moi to be a minister in the first republican cabinet. Moi successfully ingratiated himself to Kenyatta by playing down his ambition for high office, as he observed various *prima donnas*. In the process, he added internal security to home affairs and when in 1967, Murumbi resigned from the vice-presidency, Moi was appointed to the vacant post and was curiously allowed to keep his home affairs portfolio; neither Odinga nor Murumbi before had held ministerial offices in addition to the vice-presidency.

In all these developments, Moi had observed how useful the media could be in advancing a particular cause. With the 1957 election in which Africans had participated for the first time, he had noticed how the media had promoted Mboya to the extent of creating the impression that Mboya was the leader of all Africans. On the eve of independence, he had witnessed the mainstream media side with KADU, although this had not stopped the KANU momentum, in which he was

⁴² Daniel arap Moi, Contribution to debate on ... the motion on "Appointment of Africa as President of North Nyanza African District Council," Crown and Protectorate of Kenya, *Legislative Council Debates, Tenth Council, Fifth Session, Second Meeting*, February 1956, pp. 97-98.

portrayed as a far sighted chairman. He had dismissed KANU as engaging in unfulfillable promises, to mislead gullible voters. After independence, he observed the emergence of the *Nation* as the leading newspaper and how it was used to support Johnstone Muthiora against Njoroge Mungai. Nor did he like the fact that its columnists would occasionally question government judgement or his logic, and it was not lost on him how the media at the time of Kenyatta's death, had soothed Kenyans to accept the new president.

It was probably from this background that Moi wanted to be entrenched as the rightful successor to Kenyatta and to have his own imprint on the national and international scene. To do this, he proclaimed a slogan of '*Nyayo*' to mean he would follow in Kenyatta's footsteps and, at the same time he adopted the symbol of a well polished '*finbo*' or club in contrast to Kenyatta's flywhisk. He travelled extensively within the country and internationally in order to gain the recognition that he felt he deserved. And since this recognition did not seem to be coming fast enough, the ideology of the *finbo* was adopted, this became very close to the Communist political ideology, while the media were instrumental in the evolution of the *finbo* ideology.

In a crude way, this *finbo* rule was early on dramatised by Justus Ole Tipis, assistant minister in the office of the president and KANU's national treasurer. In July 1979, Tippiis beat up John Konchella with the *rungu* (club) which looked very much like Moi's *finbo*. He repeated the act in May 1981, when he beat up Robert Matano, minister for cooperative development and KANU's national secretary general. It was, he reportedly said, after beating Matano, *Rungu ya Nyayo*. Later, Matano was dismissed from the cabinet while Tipis was elevated. By then, the expression "true *nyayo* follower" had entered the political jargon as a reference to those who were perceived to be loyal to Moi and to identify those perceived to be opposed to Moi's rule. Among those perceived to be a threat to *Nyayo* dictates were people in the free press, who could also be useful in instituting what would become his *finbo* rule, symbolised by the well polished *finbo* that became his political trade-mark.

One way of implementing the *finbo* ideology, therefore, was to control the media so that only what Moi and his assistants believed was news would be published; he therefore, set out to control the print media in Kenya through a gradual process that only became apparent later. The new Moi regime started pressuring the *East African Standard* and the *Nation* to sell out to Africans so as to reflect what the government believed were the national interests. Early in 1979, the *Weekly Review* reported in July 1981, there were stories that the *East African Standard* and the *Nation* "which are both foreign owned, were under pressure to sell to local investors, ostensibly in order to make their policies more in keeping with the aspirations of the Kenyan people and government." The *East African Standard* had reacted to the pressure by appointing George Githii, former *Nation* editor in chief, "as chairman and later editor in chief of the *Standard*." Thereafter, "the pressure ...

brought on Lonrho ... seems to have been withdrawn.”⁴³ Thereafter, the *East African Standard* became a promoter of the idea that some people were better *Nyayo* followers than others and that *Nyayoism* could be measured with some degree of exactitude.⁴⁴ Although the instrument for measuring a person’s *Nyayoness* was never explained, it could be safely termed a *Nyayometre*.

With the *Standard* having accommodated the government, intensified pressure was turned on the *Nation*, whose editors and reporters appear not to have learned that they were expected to be *true Nyayo followers*. One such editor was Joe Kadhi, then Managing Editor of the *Daily Nation* who, years later talked of his experience as one of being under pressure from the His Highness The Aga Khan, from President Moi, and from reporters who did not want him to kill their special stories. Whenever Moi expressed anger at the *Nation* because of a particular story, the Aga Khan would call from Paris to remind Kadhi that, his letter of appointment stated that he should not do anything “to anger His Excellency the President.” The president would occasionally sermon Kadhi to the State House, refuse to shake hands, and then proceed to give him a dressing down and, in a gruff voice, demand to know if Kadhi had understood. At one time, Chief Secretary Jeremiah Kiereini came to Kadhi’s assistance by interjecting to say that Kadhi had understood, although, he actually could not make sense of what the president was saying. The reporters, led by their union leader, George Odiko, spent time studying Kadhi to see whether he would cave in to pressure and violate journalistic principles of accurately reporting what happened, the sort of thing that one learns in schools of journalism, even if those in authority do not like it.⁴⁵

Reporters and editors could also be arrested; Kadhi remembers his experience in police custody, for instance, when Sokhi Singh, a notorious police reservist, with whom he had been drinking at the Nairobi Club on evening, showed up in Kadhi’s office around 10.00 am the next morning and said that he wanted Kadhi to accompany him for a chat and to answer a few questions. Kadhi pointed out that they had been together the previous night and he should have asked him anything at that time. Sokhi insisted that they go and advised Kadhi to leave his coat at his desk since it would not take long; he did not get back to his waiting jacket for three days. While in the police cells, he could hear his lawyer demanding to know Kadhi’s whereabouts but the policemen on duty claimed that, they did not know where Joe Kadhi was. He attempted to shout, “I am here” and then he noticed that Sokhi Singh was comfortably seated in the same room, polishing his pistol, and so he kept quiet. When he was incarcerated in police cells, the the international media raised

⁴³ The *Weekly Review*, July 17, 1981, p. 19.

⁴⁴ Ochieng, *I Accuse the Press*, pp. 116-121.

⁴⁵ General discussions with Joe Kadhi at the United States International University in Nairobi, Nairobi.

the issue of the arrest of journalists and he and his colleagues were subsequently released.⁴⁶

The reason Kadhi and his colleagues were arrested was because, the *Nation* continued to question “some government policies and decisions,” and thereby, compared to the *Standard*, started losing government confidence. It seemed to question the government, when in April 1981, the *Nation* challenged KANU’s wisdom in stopping Oginga Odinga from contesting the Bondo parliamentary seat. In reaction, the “government accused the newspaper of assigning itself the role of an unofficial opposition party and threatened ... punitive measures if the newspaper expressed such views in the future.” The *Nation* incurred the wrath of government once again while reporting a three weeks doctors strike when it “referred to an unsigned statement by KANU on the matter as ‘anonymous’.” The government threatened to take ‘corrective measures’ against those behind the formulation of the editorial policy of the newspaper.” The threat had been actualised by the detention for several days, without charge, of editor in chief Joe Rodrigues, managing editor Joe Kadhi, news editor John Esibi, chief sub-editor Philip Ochieng, and reporters Pius Nyamora and Gideon Mulaki.⁴⁷ Nyamora had made the unknown mistake of terming an unsigned KANU statement as “anonymous” which angered KANU for implying that its leaders were “non-persons.”⁴⁸

Hilary Ng’weno had watched the pressure on the two dailies from the time it started in 1979. In June 1979, he vented his frustration with the growing government pressure by writing: “In respect to the all pervading power of the government, nothing really changed from the bad old days of colonialism. Instead of a colonial governor, you have a president or a field marshal.... Newspapers were taken over and those which were totally opposed to being incorporated into the government propaganda machinery were closed down.”⁴⁹ But given the *Weekly Review*’s financial vulnerability and not wishing to be “closed down,” Ng’weno decided to cooperate and in the process, he would become instrumental in gagging or trying to gag publications that “were totally opposed to being incorporated into the government propaganda machinery.” He would completely identify with Moi’s notion of beneficial information as being that which reflected “the cultural and ideological setting within which it is conveyed.” The media in a developing country like Kenya, Moi would emphasise in April 1986, had to ensure that “their analysis and presentation of any form of information conforms with the values and aspirations of the people. They have a duty to ensure that any materials that are

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ *Weekly Review*, July 17, 1981, p. 19.

⁴⁸ Ochieng, *I Accuse the Press*, pp. 18-19.

⁴⁹ William Hachten, “African Censorship and American Correspondents,” Beverley G. Hawk, editor, *Africa’s Media Image* (London: Praeger, 1992), p.40.

sent to the rest of the world reflect the true character of their society.”⁵⁰ To survive, Ng’weno and his *Weekly Review* became willing tools of KANU government desires.

The *Weekly Review*’s and Ng’weno’s loss of journalistic independence was evident as soon as he announced that he had sold his publication empire. It had started with the fact that the *Weekly Review* had become, within a short time, a respectable section of the mainstream which had then made Ng’weno ambitious; he out-reached himself with his idea of creating a media empire. He took out a number of bank loans to create his media empire, started a daily called *Nairobi Times* and a magazine called *Rainbow* but he was not able to sustain their viability as he ran into big debts, and was therefore easy target for a new Press Trust of Kenya which had been created in December 1980. In a *Special Announcement* instead of his usual “Letter From the Publisher,” he signed himself as Editor in Chief instead of the Publisher and wrote: “The most immediate objective of the Press Trust of Kenya ... is to keep our three publications alive.” Under the new ownership, he noted, there were going to be changes and as “resources become more available, we shall endeavour to improve the quality and scope of our publications.”⁵¹ An irate reader, David Masagege of Nairobi, complained that, the change meant loss of journalistic independence. “One gets suspicious ... when you use the words ‘national interest’ in your announcement, words which have been used before by politicians to justify unpopular measures,” he complained and went on, “could you therefore let us know the composition of the Press trust, especially its new members, because I fear, contrary to what you say, with the transfer, we will soon lose the only source of unbiased reporting.”⁵²

Masegege was not alone in believing that Ng’weno had lost journalistic independence given two stories dealing with the ‘press’ in the *Weekly Review* issue of July 17, 1981, the week after the *Special Announcement*, which made it clear that the *Weekly Review* had simply succumbed to well orchestrated pressure. One of the stories talked of the pressure on independent media by pointing out how the government had, since 1979, pressured the *Standard* and the *Nation* to sell to Africans and even threatened reporters and editors who commented critically on government policies. The other story was in the form of a letter to the editor by the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Peter Oloo Aringo, congratulating the Press Trust of Kenya for having taken over the *Weekly Review* to be used for propagating government policies. Aringo wrote, “It is the policy of our government under the wise leadership of our beloved president, the honourable, Daniel Arap

⁵⁰ Lee Njiru and Browne Kutsa, editors, *Daniel T. arap Moi: Which Way Africa? A Collection of Selected Speeches of His Excellency Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, President of the Republic of Kenya* (Nairobi: Government Press, 1997), pp. 93-94.

⁵¹ Hilary Ng’weno, Editor in Chief, “A Special Announcement,” *The Weekly Review*, July 10, 1981.

⁵² David Masagege, Letter to the Editor, *The Weekly Review*, July 24, 1981, p.3.

Moi, to encourage *wananchi* to take over the running of all sectors of our economy. Needless to stress, ownership of the press is one such vital area... we have long been concerned that our local press has not only been private but also foreign owned....” Aringo concluded in his letter, “Mr. Editor, with the emergence of the Press Trust of Kenya- putting the print media in the hands of our people through the organisation- we look forward to the opening of a new chapter between the press and the people. The venture you have entered into is in the true spirit of *nyayo* which ... will enhance and promote peace, love and unity in our beloved country ... the government will be ready to give you all the possible assistance.”⁵³ Readers of Ng’weno’s letter from the publisher also noticed that, the publisher’s letter had disappeared and in its place was a new letter from the editor.

Essentially, Ng’weno became an employee of his own creation serving KANU’s political interests. David Lamb, the then Nairobi correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times* later wrote in his book, *The Africans*: “The realities of Africa caught up with Stellascope and the future seemed predictable enough: President Moi was not going to have the same news judgment as editor Ng’weno.”⁵⁴ In the process, Ng’weno adopted Moi’s news judgment, the fire that had earlier distinguished the *Weekly Review* faded, and the magazine became identified as a mouth piece for KANU; its independence lost.

Moi’s news judgment was definitely different from that of reporters and other people who talk of freedom of the press. To ensure that his judgment prevailed beyond the *Weekly Review*, Ng’weno’s *Nairobi Times* was officially transformed into a KANU newspaper in April 1983 called *Kenya Times* which, Moi argued, was a response to the demand by *Wananchi* that KANU establish such a paper. He assured those “who may feel a KANU newspaper will be a mouth-piece, or propaganda machinery for the party and the government ... [that] the party paper will be guided by press freedom that we have always recognised in our system.” He hoped that Kenyans would buy, read, and advertise in the *Kenya Times* and ended with a plea: “It needs your support. Long Live KANU, *Nyayo*.”⁵⁵ The *Kenya Times* editorial of that first issue was forthright in its mission as it pledged to project KANU “policies in an unequivocal manner ... editorial policy will be the furtherance of the aims and objectives of the ruling party.”⁵⁶ Although the hope that people would advertise in the party newspaper, which, would become widely bought and read did not materialise in the long run, *Kenya Times* remained true to its pledge to project and defend party policies.

⁵³ Peter Oloo Aringo, Letter to the Editor, “Aringo Congratulates Press Trust of Kenya,” *The Weekly Review*, July 17, 1981, p.18.

⁵⁴ David Lamb, *The Africans* (New York: Random House, 1983), p.257.

⁵⁵ Moi’s statement on the launching of the *Kenya Times*, Issue Number 1, Tuesday, April 5, 1983, pp. 1 and 18.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Editorial, p. 6.

With support from official largesse in terms of government and parastatals advertisement, however, the *Kenya Times* established itself as a mainstream newspaper whose mission was to promote and defend the government. It initially appeared to attract journalistic notables, such as Margaretta wa Gacheru, it also hired some journalists who had been detained by Moi in 1981, among these being Pius Nyamora, whose offending reference to an ‘anonymous.’ statement had landed him in detention. There was also Henry Gathigira who became editor in chief and had vast editorial experience in the *Standard* and the *Nation* which he brought to bear in the production of the *Kenya Times*. Having helped the *Standard* to find ways of measuring *Nyayoism*, under George Githii’s guidance,⁵⁷ Gathigira was properly tuned to follow Moi’s news judgment which required every Kenyan to sing after the president. In September 1984, Moi had made it clear that he did not want people to think on their own, he being the only thinker, as he ordered and explained: “I would like ministers, assistant ministers and others to sing like a parrot after me During Kenyatta’s time, I sang only ‘Kenyatta’ I didn’t have ideas of my own. Who was I to have my own ideas?... So you play my tune. Where I put a full stop, you put a full stop.”⁵⁸ Before Moi made this kind of mind set public in September 1984, it had become so widespread that it even permeated foreign embassies, such as that of France which in May 1984 did everything possible to separate itself from a presentation by Joe Kadhi, then managing editor of the *Nation*, on Freedom of the Press.⁵⁹

Gathigira was fired in 1988 and his place was taken up by Philip Ochieng, who had been detained with Nyamora. Ochieng went out of his way to raid the staff at the *Nation* in order to give the *Kenya Times* some credibility. At the *Kenya Times*, Ochieng was no longer the critic who defended press freedom and had accused Moi of behaving like a big brother. His mind, as reflected in his articles, appeared to be set on bringing down the *Nation*’s reputation as an authoritative newspaper. His activities at the *Kenya Times* were commended by KANU Organising Secretary Kalonzo Musyoka who in 1989, described the *Nation* as unpatriotic, it had been barred from reporting parliamentary deliberations. Musyoka, according to the *Finance* cover story of June 1989 on the ‘Press in Kenya’, described Ochieng “as a patriotic son of Kenya who chose not to operate the ‘Nation’ way and moved to the present status to expose the machinations of his former employer.”⁶⁰ Gone were the days when Ochieng could mock the president, as he did in 1969 when he asked how Kenyatta expected him to employ a tenth of a person given that he had only

⁵⁷ Gathigira worked under Githii at the *Standard* from 1979-1981 when he retired. See Ochieng, *I Accuse the Press*, pp. 116-121, 195-196.

⁵⁸ Quote in Sheila Rule, “No Tune Like His Own Tune, Kenyan Tells Nation”, *New York Times*, November 7, 1984; see also Glenn Frankel, “Scars of Failed Coup Attempt Still Etched on Kenyan Psyche”, *The Washington Post*, September 30, 1984.

⁵⁹ “Lecture by Joe Kadhi... 25th May 1984.”

⁶⁰ Cover Story, “Press in Kenya”, *FINANCE*, June 1989, p. 35.

one employee.⁶¹ Instead, Ochieng's new role was to help the media play the role of ensuring that people did not have ideas of their own, and stayed away from such topics as freedom of the press.

Media challenge and resistance to fimbo ideology

As previous defenders of freedom of the press such as Ng'weno and Ochieng lost their journalistic independence, and the mainstream media such as the *Nation* worried more about not arousing the wrath of the government, it became apparent that there was room for independent publications that would give alternative news and views. These, started in a circumspective way and then grew bolder, in their presentation of political news in ways that were critical of the government. The first of these publications was Njehu Gatabaki's *Finance*, in 1983. This was followed in 1985 by *Beyond*, sponsored by the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCKK) and edited by Bedan Mbugua. Peter Kareithi came up with *Financial Review* in 1987, closely followed by Gitobu Imanyara's *Nairobi Law Monthly* and Pius Nyamora's *Society*. These were the magazines that led the struggle for multi-partyism in Kenya, which culminated in the 1992 general election. After multi-partism was made legal, the *Nation* and the *East African Standard* became bolder and started covering events which previously were left to the alternative press.

The crusading spirit started in unlikely quarters namely, *Beyond* and *Financial Review*. In June 1985, the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCKK) founded a monthly religious magazine, edited by Bedan Mbugua, to promote religious life. *Beyond* gradually acquired a reputation for going out of its way to challenge such ungodly behaviour as "tribalism, injustice, social immorality" and political chicanery. In 1986, when, the government decided to introduce the queue voting system in KANU's nomination system, *Beyond* attracted attention by opposing the decision. The bravery of the editor became common talk in Nairobi as people went through different issues of *Beyond* as they rolled off hot from the press. Queue voting had been imposed on the country during the March 1988 elections, and was characterised by rampant, open rigging, after Mbugua published evidence of the rigging, the government banned *Beyond* and jailed the editor. The banning of *Beyond*, however, simply opened the door for the *Financial Review* to emerge from the shadows of the *Weekly Review*. *Financial Review* had started as an occasional supplement of the *Weekly Review* in 1985. Then on June 27, 1986, the *Weekly Review* announced the starting of the *Financial Review* as a separate weekly publication, the first issue was to come out on Monday June 30, 1986 and every Monday thereafter. At that time, among the journalists working for the *Weekly Review* included Peter Kareithi, a senior editor, who later became the editor in

⁶¹ Philip Ochieng, "Mzee, My Friend," *Sunday Nation*, May 1969, p. 6.

chief of the *Financial Review* after March 27, 1987 when his name stopped appearing in the *Weekly Review* masthead.

Whatever may have been envisaged to be Kareithi's role was obscured as he quickly turned into a disappointment for the owners of the *Weekly Review*; indeed he asserted his independence in 1988 when he published incisive political commentaries exposing graft in official circles. In its cover story "Paper Politics" in the June 6, 1988 issue, for instance, the *Financial Review* accused the government of insincerity in dealing with Kenyan investors of African origins by seemingly favouring Asiatics. With an editorial termed "Another Nail to the Coffin," Kareithi asserted that the government had "killed" Mathupaper and thereby put "another nail into the coffin of the dying horse, Kenyan leaders call indigenisation."⁴³

Like *Beyond*, the *Financial Review* also aroused government anger by commenting on the rigging of the *mlolongoo* (queue) elections, which it described as "the game of numbers."⁴⁴ Through the *mlolongo*, it noted later that, the voter's card had become devalued because the excitement and "eating" associated with a voter's card in a secret ballot made the candidates generous toward the potential voters. With the *mlolongo*, the voter's card had become financially useless.⁴⁵ Curiously, the *Weekly Review* went to court to stop the *Financial Review* from publishing political stories and commentaries, an action that raised eyebrows considering how vehemently Ng'weno had defended the freedom of the press in the 1960s. But then, he had already been transformed "from a gadfly to a fly", as journalist David Makali termed him.⁴⁶ Ng'weno's court action notwithstanding, the *Financial Review* continued to publish devastating stories of misdeeds in high circles, it especially annoyed the government by printing details of mismanagement in a milling parastatal which the government had just empowered to commandeer private grain storage facilities. Infuriated, ministers like Shariff Nassir called for the gagging of the press. The government then banned *Financial Review* when Kareithi refused to apologise.⁴⁷

The demise of *Beyond* and the *Financial Review*, however could not dampen the new spirit of challenging the docility of the mainstream media. This was made clear by the thriving of three magazines that challenged Moi's *fimbo* ideology. These were the *Nairobi Law Monthly*, *Finance*, and *Society*. The *Nairobi Law Monthly* appeared to be aimed at Kenya's small legal fraternity. Founded in

⁴³ "Another Nail to the Coffin," *Financial Review*, June, 6, 1988

⁴⁴ Cover Story, *Financial Review*, February 29, 1988.

⁴⁵ Cover Story, *Financial Review*, March 14, 1988.

⁴⁶ David Makali, "Hilary Ng'weno: From Gadfly to (just) a Fly" *The Nairobi Law Monthly*, January 1996, pp. 8-9, 22.

⁴⁷ Blaine Harde, "Kenya Bans Probing Magazine" *The Washington Post*, April 26, 1989; Jane Parlex, "Nairobi Orders Ban on 2nd Magazine in a Year," *New York Times*, May 10, 1989.

September 1987, by Gitobu Imanyara, it proclaimed its mission to be “presentation ... of information pertaining to law in a legal context ... to bring to your attention ... news which illustrates some of the important developments in our jurisprudence ... to be a law magazine of record.”⁴⁸ As if to indicate the political direction it would take, the first issue dealt with such sensitive issues as the “death of Stephen Mbaraka Karanja,” the honoring of John Khaminwa by Haverford College in the USA for his involvement in representing Wambui Otieno in the SM Otieno burial saga, and a laudatory coverage of Justice Chunilal B. Madan’s legal and constitutional wisdom.⁴⁹ It started capturing the public mood beyond the legal fraternity, by questioning court decisions that did not make sense, by publicising human rights abuses and the harassment of judicial officers. One of those harassed judicial officers was Justice Patrick O’Connor whose disagreements with Chief Justice Cecil Miller led to his dismissal. In a lengthy interview with the *Nairobi Law Monthly*, O’Connor revealed why he was fired.⁵⁰ The monthly challenged tribalism in government and gave audience to non-conformist lawyers who raised philosophical and practical questions on judicial practice in Kenya. The harassment that Imanyara received from the government simply attracted more readers to the *Nairobi Law Monthly*.

There was also Njehu Gatabaki’s *Finance*, an older publication than Imanyara’s *Nairobi Law Monthly*. As the political tempo in the country heated up with demands for multi-partyism, *Finance* got into the fray and became an organ through which government critics could have their views presented to the public. Initially, Gatabaki’s idea had been to cater for Kenya’s capitalistic interests and to pamper industrial and financial tycoons who would then advertise in his magazine. A look at the 1983 to 1988 issues, which were sporadic, reveals none of the crusading zeal with which Gatabaki would later be identified. He started to question the government gradually as he tried to balance criticism with appropriate praises of Moi and different government agencies and parastatals. In June 1989, for instance, Gatabaki carried an extensive story on parliament’s decision to bar the Nation from covering its activities; Gatabaki termed the act an “infringement of freedom of the press.” Advertisements in the same issue included those from Kenya Commercial Bank, Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation, Philips, Marshalls, Xerox, and the East African Industries.⁶² A year later, *Finance* was accused by Assistant Minister for National Planning and Development, Mr. Abdi Ogle, of being used by dissidents, as he called for it to be banned.⁶³ By giving

⁴⁸ Gitobu Imanyara, “From the Desk of the Editor,” *The Nairobi Law Monthly*, September 1987, p.1.

⁴⁹ See stories in *Ibid.*, pp. 3-8, 18-19.

⁵⁰ Cover story, “Why I was dismissed—an interview with Mr. Justice O’Oconor,” *The Nairobi Law Monthly*, November 1988.

⁶² Cover story “Press in Kenya,” *FINANCE*, June 1989. For reference to Moi as a defender of freedom of the press, see p.41.

⁶³ *FINANCE*, July 16-31, 1990, p.5.

exclusive interviews to multi-party advocates such as Charles Rubia, Oginga Odinga and Achieng Oneko, Gatabaki was increasingly identified with multi-party forces.

Another magazine that gradually took on the government was *Society*. *Society* was founded in 1989 by Pius Nyamora, a former *Nation* and *Kenya Times* staffer, whose description of the KANU leadership as 'anonymous' in 1981 had earned him and other *Nation* workers a few days in police custody. Initially run as a light reading monthly magazine, *Society* joined the multi-party crusade in 1990, and then went weekly in 1991. It had started gradually by analysing the fate of people who had fallen out with the government while still paying compliments to President Moi. In October 1990, he featured political prisoner George Anyona's experience with lunatics, the tribulations of Simeon Nyachae, and the continuing saga of Robert Ouko's death.⁶⁴ It carried a lengthy cover story on Gitobu Imanyara in its November 1990 issue,⁶⁵ whom it described as "The Hated Man," this was followed in December with a lengthy but humorous interview with Koigi wa Wamwere's mother on "how Koigi was delivered" and at the same time, in the editorial, congratulated "our President Moi for his 35 years of exemplary service...to Kenyans and his determination to lay a firm foundation for our children."⁶⁶ Nyamora, as late as June 1991, was pleading with Kenyans not to "Push Our Old Man to the Wall" as he praised Moi for having "done what other average leaders would have taken a century or longer to achieve."⁶⁷

By the time he launched the weekly in October 1991, however, he was no longer cautioning people to be easy on Moi; he was instead fully identified with those who vilified the president. In its first weekly issue in October 1991, which examined the phenomenon of political godfathers in Kenya, the editorial complained of magazine vendors being "harassed by some unpatriotic security men, who are used like dogs by local masters." The editorial urged security men to "put the interest of the country before the selfish interests of those local godfathers."⁶⁸ By December 1991, Nyamora was not praising Moi any more. Instead, he was writing that: "for years, President Daniel arap Moi has feasted on a nourishing menu of 'good news' and his popularity" and when "patriotic Kenyans and others concerned about the worsening state of affairs started raising their voices, they are instantly branded *anti-nyayo*, '*vibaraka vya ukoloni mamboleo*'... and many other political adjectives, which struck comforting cords in the ears of the President." Multi-party politics had come

⁶⁴ See entire issue of *Society*, October 1990.

⁶⁵ Cover Story, "The Hated Man," *Society*, November 1990.

⁶⁶ Editorial, "Thank You Minister President," and Cover Story on "How Koigi was Delivered," *Society*, December, 1990.

⁶⁷ Editorial, "Don't Push Our Oldman to the Wall," *Society*, June 1991.

⁶⁸ Editorial, *Society*, October 28, 1991.

to stay, Nyamora concluded, "and no amount of public platitudes and mass choirs can hold the sweeping tide."⁶⁹

The three magazines, *Finance*, *Nairobi Law Monthly*, and *Society* were largely responsible for bringing multi-party politics to Kenya. Their being accepted by the public and the subsequent flattery by the mainstream media which started addressing the same issues, essentially incorporated them into the media mainstream. Having successfully crusaded for multi-party politics, the seeming unity of the three fragmented into political propaganda instruments wither for FORD -Kenya under Odinga or for FORD-Asili under Matiba. Imanyara and Nyamora joined Odinga while, Gatabaki hitched his journalistic tent with Matiba. By then, they had all made their mark in Kenya's political history.

After the 1992 and 1997 general elections, new types of alternative print media came into the picture to challenge the *Nation*, the *Standard*, and the *Kenya Times*. The first of these was Kenneth Matiba's *The People*, a weekly newspaper that quickly established itself as a consistent critic of the Moi regime and essentially became a mirror image of *Kenya Times*. It was a party newspaper espousing the policies of FORD-Asili when Matiba was the party chairman, when Matiba quarrelled with FORD-Asili Secretary General Martin Shikuku and then went on to found his own Saba Saba-Asili, the *People* began to espouse Saba Saba Asili policies. With Bedan Mbugua as the initial editor, the *People* appeared to have attracted readership not only from the opposition but also government operatives. Its policy of questioning government decisions or court judgements that are nonsense landed the editor and one of his journalists, David Makali, in prison. The one case that turned the two into media heroes was the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) case in which, the Court of Appeal presided over by Chief Justice Apaloo decided against university lecturers and seemingly ignored what was considered compelling evidence in support of the lecturers. By questioning the decision, the *People* journalists were charged with contempt of court, ordered to apologise, and when they refused, they were sent to prison.⁷⁰ With its recruitment of such old hands as George Mbuguss, observers could discern increased professionalism and respectability among the growing numbers of *People* readers. Within a short time therefore, the *People* became accepted as part of the mainstream and there was therefore room for more alternative press which came in the form of *Economic Review*.

Though the *People* was a weekly publication attracting wide readership, there was a class of elitist readers who had earlier partly been served by *Financial Review* in terms of thoughtful commentary and well researched articles on economic and

⁶⁹ Editorial, *Society*, December 16, 1991.

⁷⁰ The writer was in the Court when the judges gave their ruling on the UASU case after which a woman present remarked: "We have laws, we have courts, but we do not have judges." *The People* appeared to have shared the sentiments and in publishing them, got into trouble.

political issues. It was this class that the well packaged *The Economic Review* was established to serve. It became a magazine that appealed to the intellect and helped shape opinions as it forthrightly cut through jargon and presented stories in unflattering terms. When members of Kalenjin-Maasai-Turkana-Samburu (KAMATUSA) and Gikuyu-Embu-Meru Association (GEMA) decided to talk to each other about political killings in the Rift Valley, for instance, the *Economic Review* dismissed the key participants as "Warlords" and "Dinosaurs."⁷¹

It minced no words in pointing out that it was Moi who had incited violence. First, there was his reaction to the call by the National Conventional Executive Council (NCEC) for mass action beginning with a May 3, 1997 rally at Kamukunji grounds. Moi, it pointed out, visited 'Machakos Airport' near Kamukunji, on April 22, 1997 and told citizens that advocates of reforms were anarchists and tribalists, "are these, he asked a charged crowd, the reforms you want?" The crowd responded by assuring him: "*Tutawafukuza*", meaning "We shall chase them away".⁷² Moi, *Economic Review* columnist Macharia Gaitho commented, had "publicly exhorted touts and hawkers to be prepared to repel any such assembly."⁷³

Second, Moi's support for two KANU toughs, Fred Gumo and Daniel Kongo also attracted attention. Gumo, the KANU Member of Parliament for Westlands organised a new group of hoodlums known as *Jeshi la Mzee* whose purpose was⁷⁴ to disrupt opposition rallies. On the day of the rally, the riot police better known as the GSU (the General Service Unit), and *Jeshi la Mzee* attacked those in the rally.⁷⁵ *Jeshi la Mzee* was equally active at Uhuru Park on 31 May 1997, just ahead of the Madaraka Day celebrations on June 1. With the reform activists carrying placards stating "No Reforms, No Elections," the police exploded teargas canisters while Gumo's men went into action to reinforce the riot police and avoided arrest by simply identifying themselves as *Jeshi la Mzee*.⁷⁶ In addition, because the reformers had talked of demonstrations on the budget day, Thursday, June 19, 1997, Moi authorised Nairobi KANU Chairman Daniel Kongo, to organise his own anti-reform group. According to *The Economic Review*, Moi told Kongo to "stage counter-demonstrations, and employ violence if necessary, to neutralise the 'No Reforms, No Budget' demonstrations planned outside parliament... To lubricate the scheme, chairmen or representatives of the city were given Shs.50, 000 each for the purpose of recruiting local toughs who would form the core of the KANU counter

⁷¹ See Cover Story, "Strange Bedfellows," *The Economic Review*, July 24–30, 1995.

⁷² *East African Standard* April 23, 1997, p.2.

⁷³ Macharia Gaitho, "Where The Buck Stops," *The Economic Review*, June 9–15, 1997, p.40.

⁷⁴ On December 11, 1997, Fred Gumo admitted that he created *Jeshi la Mzee*. See *East African Standard*, December 12, 1997, p.4.

⁷⁵ Ibid.; *The Weekly Review*, May 9, 1997, pp. 10–11; Joseph Mutua, Letter to Editor, "Moi Incited Youths," *FINANCE*, June 10 23, 1997, p. 7.

⁷⁶ Gaitho, "Where the Buck Stops," Tony Gachoka, "As I See It," *FINANCE*, June 10–23, 1997, p. 20; *The Sunday Nation*, June 1, 1997.

demonstration."⁷⁷ Such commentaries about Moi's activities were not amusing to the KANU leader.

The proprietors and editors of the *Economic Review*, who were very good with their political and economic analyses, however, turned out to be poor book keepers. Despite their regular professional advice on economic matters, they were caught flat-footed and had to close down because of tax problems. Critics noted the strange coincidence of the appointment of Hilary Ng'weno in 1998, as Chairman of the Kenya Revenue Authority, and the closure of the *Economic Review*, because of tax irregularities. The demise of the *Economic Review*, created a void for thoughtful publication that has as yet to be filled. By the time of its closure, the *Economic Review* had become part of the mainstream but it had not learnt how to survive in adverse conditions which, the *People* had. The success of the *People*, as an organ of a political party, convinced other political parties to consider starting their own publications. This happened, particularly after the 1997 general elections, when a group associated with the Democratic Party of Kenya (DP) launched *The Star*, with a University of Nairobi, journalism lecturer, Magayu K. Magayu, as an editor.

The Star attracted attention with screaming headlines about political killings in Molo, corruption in high places and a purported coup plot. In its story on the purported coup, *The Star* claimed that the plot was hatched by top government leaders and KANU hawks in order to discredit the opposition and justify a massive repression of dissent."⁷⁸ It set precedent when it helped to defy the Registrar General's supposed proscription by insisting that, the Registrar did not have power to do that; the Courts agreed. By September 1998, *The Star* had begun to acquire the main characteristic of mainstream media, acceptability by readers, in general. It therefore, seemingly joined the *Nation*, the *Weekly Review*, the *Kenya Times*, the *People*, and *FINANCE*, as publications that started as alternative press and then became part of the mainstream, although, its long term viability was not clear.

Conclusion

A look at the fate of the alternative media in Kenya during the last four decades reveals some hard lessons for their survival. There are those that, having been established to address a particular need, gained a following and support of all kinds that eventually helps them to become part of the mainstream. They forced the mainstream to adjust their outlook, but, given their financial resources, the new alternative press can be rendered irrelevant and therefore driven out of circulation. If the mainstream press does not adjust to the changing political and social climate,

⁷⁷ *The Economic Review*, June 23–29, 1997, p.6.

⁷⁸ "How the 'Coup' was to be executed," *The Star*, March 27–30, 1998.

they too, may be forced to fold. The survival or folding up of alternative media depended on a number of factors.

First, alternative media can cease to operate if and when it is rendered irrelevant by the mainstream media that deliberately co-opts many of the issues that had given momentum to the alternative press. With more resources than those available to the newcomer, the mainstream media can deal with the pertinent issues in depth and provide additional information and analyses that would attract the readers who want to be informed about a given problem. In the process, the alternative press may appear to be shallow, uncoordinated, and incapable of providing serious interpretations of the events that affect the readers. This is the impression that the mainstream press tries to give to the readers in order to eliminate unwelcome competition for readers and advertising revenue. As a result, the readership goes down and the alternative media stops being attractive.

Second, and more serious, the operations of the alternative press are hampered by a deliberate state policy to run them down. Frequent impoundment of issues, containing what the government does not want its citizens to read, are financially destructive to the publisher. Arrests, detentions, and jailing of journalists have the effect of stopping nosy reporters from getting too close to what authorities do not wish the public to know. Added to this, are sedition laws, which are deliberately applied against members of the alternative press, whose court attendance is then made expensive when their cases are tried in courts far from where they reside. If other modes of intimidation fail, there is always the option of banning the publication, which then makes it a criminal offence to publish. Eventually, this was the way the government stopped *Beyond* and *Financial Review*. Again, away from declaring a publication to be criminal, its proprietors can be persuaded to stop operating though demanding back taxes, indeed, this is what happened to the *Economic Review*.

Third, the alternative press can cease to operate if and when it alienates key supporters. It loses its core readers when it is perceived to have become antagonistic to their interests. Added to the other two factors of the mainstream and state machinations, the alternative press cannot alienate its readers and survive. This is what happened to *Society*, which, until 1992, appeared as the cartoon in the back cover of many issues and claimed that it was growing stronger. After FORD, the pressure group, split into FORD-Kenya and FORD-Asili, *Society* joined FORD-Kenya and rooted for that party. It, however, alienated many Kikuyu readers because it appeared to mount an attack on them as a people by condemning Kikuyu politicians who did not join FORD-Kenya as exhibiting "Kikuyu Greed." Nyamora gave the impression that the only way one can practise democracy was by joining FORD-Kenya and supporting Odinga's presidential ambitions. Since a lot of people who bought *Society* every week did not subscribe to that kind of political doctrine, they stopped buying the magazine and it eventually folded in 1993.

Fourth, an alternative press media can stop operating because its founder or publisher becomes pre-occupied with other matters not pertaining to publishing. *The Nairobi Law Monthly* is a good example because it became irregular and almost defunct when Gitobu Imanyara became too immersed in FORD-Kenya's political intrigues, to concentrate on his journal. Whereas Imanyara found his way to Parliament on a FORD-Kenya ticket, after the 1997 election, his magazine has disappeared from circulation. Further, because it was too much of a personal operation rather than institutional, there was no way of continuing what Imanyara had started so well. Besides, he seemed to have lost interest in the initial crusading that had made him so influential, and become part of the establishment, concerned more with hobnobbing with those he had previously castigated than, publishing the *Law Monthly*.

The following three reasons have been given as to the converse of why the alternative press folds, and why they manage to survive and become part of the mainstream media. First, if the alternative media is well endowed with resources and tries hard to keep up with the changes that occur, then, it is likely to survive as the existing mainstream media lose relevance and decline. A good example is the *Nation* which, with time, replaced the *Standard* as the mainstream print media in Kenya. With immense resources from the Aga Khan, and by capturing the independence euphoria, the *Nation* offered an alternative. Although the *Standard* tried to adjust to the new political conditions, it was not capable of containing the *Nation's* expansion which, ultimately, was at the expense of the *Kenya Weekly News* and the *Sunday Post*.

Second, the alternative media can survive due to government and political party determination and largesse. *The Weekly Review* had started well but Ng'weno's media imperialistic ambitions led to financial problems which could be solved only by associating with KANU and the government which then bailed him out and helped to keep afloat. More open than the *Weekly Review* in its links to KANU and the government is the *Kenya Times* which was kept afloat by subsidies in the form of advertisement by government departments and parastatals. Both, in the process became good defenders of KANU and government policies at all times.

Third, the alternative press can manage to survive because it attracts core followers who buy and advertise in a given media, despite all adversities. Such a core following, can influence other readers and advertisers to join in, ensuring that, a particular media survives, so as to continue addressing those issues that other media ignore. They help to make alternative media part of the mainstream. This explains the survival of the *People* and *FINANCE*. The following that the publications have, however, partly depends on the public perception of their determination to survive against all types of adversities. This determination has its own attraction to the readers. Whatever the circumstances involved in the transformation of alternative press into the mainstream, they will have addressed a particular need that helped them to survive. And because the circumstances are

different for each media, they end up espousing different political and ideological positions to defend the interests of their sponsors. For this reason, there are times when members of the press appear to be confused and not concerned with protecting their interest as journalists.

While differences of opinion and positions on various issues are expected, what is surprising is that there are journalists who supported and advocated the harassment of other journalists or the banning of publications. In part, this behaviour may be due to the fact that most journalists do not necessarily know of, or worry about, their fundamental rights as journalists. Because of that ignorance, or don't care attitude, they end up calling for the infringement of the rights of others or of budding journalists and publications.⁷⁹ In a way, the call for others to be harassed or banned is part of the process of the mainstream media protecting their interests by eliminating actual and potential competition. They however, never succeed and are unlikely to succeed in such ventures because someone somewhere has always, and will always, try to come up with an alternative to whatever is the mainstream press of the day.

⁷⁹ Makumi Mwagiru, "A Return to Basics: Media Rights as Fundamental Human Rights," *African Media Review*, Volume 11, Number 2, 1997, pp. 88–104; Peter Wanyande, "The Media as Civil Society and Their Role in Democratic Transition in Kenya," *Africa Media Review*, 1996, pp. 1–20; Cover Story, "Media Under Siege," *Economic Review*, April 18–24, 1994, pp. 4–9; Mutuma Mathiu, "Political Chicanery is a Danger to Free Press," *Sunday Nation*, January 19, 1998, p. 9' Cartoons and stories in "Insight Magazine," *Kenya Times*, July 16, 1998 and July 23, 1998; see also Editorial, *Kenya Times*, July 13, 1998, p.6.

Chapter Nine

The Role of the Media in Fighting Corruption: The Best Practices

I

In thinking about the role of the media in fighting corruption, it is appropriate to ask what role the media has played and what should be its role. For instance, one can question the effect of the media and what dimensions they can take in order to be more effective than they presumably are, the preliminary response is that the media in general have actively fought corruption adequately, mainly by exposing such activities to the public; however, this has been within the limits of the prevailing political climate. The media arguably, are effective when one of two conditions prevail. First, is a condition of relative democracy, when media personnel are not in great danger of jail, torture or death from state machinery. In such conditions, the mainstream media tend to be active in exposing financial and economic corruption and abuse of office. The second condition is one of extreme repression when, all institutions are cowed by the state and the media, whether private or public, become an extension of the ruling regime and are involved in covering up abuse of office. In such a condition, it is the rise of the alternative press that, at great risk to the publishers and reporters, exposes corruption and all types of abuse of power. The alternative press helps to soften the repressive state and essentially create an alternative center of power. The mainstream media then joins in the exposure exercise once the regime is on its back and corruption becomes topical.

Kenya is a good example for illustrating these two conditions. In the 1960s, there was relative democracy and the mainstream media enjoyed hitting out at the emerging trend of corruption. One of those early critics, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, wanted governments in East Africa to be forthright in discussing the idea of federation because he argued, people "would like to know where and how they are being led."¹ Ngugi left journalism to concentrate on teaching, and became more disillusioned with the Kenyatta regime but he maintained that in the 1960s, there

¹ James Ngugi, "As I See It: Isn't it time the public were asked about federation?," *The Daily Nation*, September 1, 1963, p. 31.

was, in Kenya, “a degree of an open society, which is not appreciated enough. A lot of books with conflicting ideas are allowed to circulate in Kenya, though we have also banned a good number of publications. Also, there is a degree of free speech which, I think, is lacking in other countries in Africa.”² Ngugi was followed by Hilary Ng’weno who, occasionally commented on corruption and freedom of the press and urged the government “to sacrifice those few among them whose corrupt practices tend to mar the image of the government for such people are a liability not only to the government but to the nation as a whole.”³

This had driven the then, Vice-President, Daniel arap Moi, to complain that “... in certain sections of the press, as well as in Parliament, it has recently become fashionable to make sanctimonious reference to or advance vague accusations about bribery and corruption in Kenya’s public life.” Such allegations, Moi believed, undermined the morale of a young nation like Kenya.”⁴ There was also Philip Ochieng who accused Moi of adopting a big brother mentality towards the press. Ochieng wrote: “It is like big brother telling little brother ‘You have freedom to say what you want to say, except that it won’t be necessary, for I have made up my mind that you have no cause to disagree. I allow you to talk except that you must not talk, because I said it for you.’”⁵

The second condition arose in the 1980s, when the Kenyan regime became excessively repressive, torture became the norm and the mainstream media were so cowed, that the need for an alternative press to discuss the problems of political and economic corruption arose. In the 1980s, the media were turned into tools for implementing what was essentially a *finbo* ideology through pressure on the *East African Standard* and the *Nation*, according to a *Weekly Review* analysis in July 1981, “in order to make their policies more in keeping with the aspirations of Kenyan people and government.” There was also pressure from the proprietors and their representatives to accommodate government desires. Joe Kadhi, then the Managing Editor of the *Daily Nation* remembers that whenever Moi expressed anger because of a particular story, the Aga Khan would call from Paris to remind Kadhi that his letter of appointment stated that he should not do anything “to anger His Excellency the President.” Journalists were thereby put in a three-way fix involving the owner, the political power, and journalistic expectations.⁶

² On the Carpet, James Ngugi Talks to Peter Darling. *Sunday Nation*, March 16, 1969, p. 15.

³ Hilary Ng’weno, “Commentary on a menace no-one wants to talk about, corruption: should the press be given the right to root it out.” *Sunday Nation*, January 21, 1968, pp.4-5.

⁴ “The Week in Kenya,” *Sunday Nation*, January 28, 1968, p.8.

⁵ Philip Ochieng, “The Kenya Press—We Must Agree to Disagree,” *Sunday Nation*, March 23, 1969.

⁶ Joe S. M. Kadhi, “Anglophone Africa: Journalists-Puppets of the Proprietors?,” in Michael Kunczick, editor, *Ethics in Journalism: A Reader on Their Perception on the Third World* (Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1999), pp.83-85; General discussions with Joe Kadhi at the United States International University in Nairobi, Nairobi.

Many responded by accommodating the Moi regime in order to be politically in tune. The *East African Standard*, for instance, became a promoter of the idea that some people were better *Nyayo* followers than others and that *Nyayoism* could be measured with some degree of exactitude.⁷ Ng'weno, the founder of the *Weekly Review*, noted in June 1979 that, the media that "were totally opposed to being incorporated into the government propaganda machinery, were closed down."⁸ Given the *Weekly Review's* financial vulnerability, and not wishing to be "closed down," he decided to identify with Moi's notion of beneficial information as being that which reflected "the cultural and ideological setting within which it is conveyed."⁹ David Lamb, the then Nairobi correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times* later wrote in his book, *The Africans*: "President Moi was not going to have the same news judgment as Editor, Ng'weno."¹⁰ In the process, the fire that had earlier distinguished the *Weekly Review* faded, and the magazine became identified as a mouth piece for KANU. It was this transformation that David Makali said had changed Ngweno "from a gadfly to a fly".¹¹ Another journalist who lost independence was Ochieng, he was dragged into the *nyayo* net, no longer the critic who defended the freedom of the press, he received glowing commendation from KANU Organising Secretary, Kalonzo Musyoka who, according to the *FINANCE* cover story of June 1989 on the 'Press in Kenya', described Ochieng "as a patriotic son of Kenya who chose not to operate the 'Nation' way and moved to the present status to expose the machinations of his former employer."¹² Such compromised media and journalists were hardly in a position to raise questions about corruption in the government.

When in the 1980s, previous defenders of the freedom of the press appeared to condone political and economic corruption with fears about arousing the wrath of the government, independent publications became bolder in their presentation of political and economic analysis of what was going wrong. Among these were *Finance*, in 1983, followed in 1985 by *Beyond*. Then there followed *Financial Review* in 1987, *Nairobi Law Monthly* and *Society*. The *Financial Review* cover story of June 6, 1988, for instance, was on "Paper Politics" and accused the government of insincerity in dealing with Kenyan investors of African origins by seemingly favouring Asians. With an editorial termed "Another Nail to the Coffin,"

⁷ Philip Ochieng, *I Accuse the Press: An Insider's View of the Media and Politics in Africa* (Nairobi: ACTS Press, 1992), pp. 116-121.

⁸ William Hachten, "African Censorship and American Correspondents," Beverley G. Hawk, editor, *Africa's Media Image* (London: Praeger, 1992), p.40.

⁹ Lee Njiru and Browne Kutswa, eds., *Daniel T. arap Moi: Which Way Africa? A Collection of Selected Speeches of His Excellency Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, President of the Republic of Kenya* (Nairobi: Government Press, 1997), pp. 93-94.

¹⁰ David Lamb, *The Africans* (New York: Random House, 1983), p.257.

¹¹ David Makali, "Hilary Ng'weno: From Gadfly to (just) a Fly," *The Nairobi Law Monthly*, January 1996, pp. 8-9, 22.

¹² "Press in Kenya", *FINANCE*, June 1989, p. 35.

the columnist stated that the government had “killed” Madhupaper and thereby put “another nail into the coffin of the dying horse that Kenyan leaders call indigenisation.” The mainstream media were not able to expose that kind of corruption.

II

Let us look at what corruption is and what the media are and then, try to relate the two. Corruption is abuse of office, power, and influence to benefit an individual or a group materially, financially, socially or politically, at the expense of other people or groups of people. It is often the material and financial aspect of corruption that captures journalistic imagination and public attention. In Kenya, according to John Githongo, formerly the Permanent Secretary for Ethics, there are three levels of corruption mainly petty, grand, and looting. While petty corruption may be economically driven, grand corruptin and looting are essentially political in the sense that, the decision to do so are made by those wielding political power and position to enrich themselves and to impoverish the country.¹³ Those who engaged in such action were politically in tune, meaning that they understood the nature and culture of political corruption in Kenya. “Corruption,” pleaded Silas Ita of Kenya’s Investment Promotion Centre in 1989, “should be understood in its own perspective.” That perspective, Roger Thurow of *The Wall Street Journal* wrote, was the KANU perspective.¹⁴ The mainstream media were in tune, accommodating the government and thereby turning a blind eye to the wrongs that were taking place.

On its part, the term media conveys the impression of a conveyor belt through which, information and messages are passed, from one area or person, to another. In this sense, media would be mechanical involving print, radio and television, and more recently digital and internet instruments of message conveyance. In themselves, these tools are innocent; their importance is in the use to which they are put, by whom, and for what purpose. This is where journalism comes in; theoretically, journalism is a profession whose purpose is to keep a public journal of events for public consumption and for public record. Other related purposes are to entertain, to educate and to empower the reader or the recipient of that information. Journalism therefore is very powerful because it is the agent of empowerment.

It is necessary to raise the question of whether journalism, as a profession, has a philosophy. Given that, for the most part, journalism started as a craft, has it evolved from being merely a craft or technique of keeping records or journals? The

¹³ John Githongo, “Corruption in Kenya,” 21st Century Trust Lecture, Queens College, Cambridge University, England, July 10-18, 1998.

¹⁴ Roger Thurow, “Capital Flight Strains Kenyan Economy,” *The Wall Street Journal*, August 17, 1989.

distinction between technique and philosophy is important since there was a time when practitioners of journalism were thought to be failures in other areas.¹⁵ A philosophy of journalism would demand intellectual rigour, deep reflection, and self-questioning as to whether the discipline is moving in the right direction. It is that intellectual component, so argues Michael Kunczik that would enable journalists to notice and understand an injustice when it occurs and then decide to expose it. In exposing an injustice, intellectuals help to delegitimize those in power.¹⁶ A philosophy for journalism, therefore, would involve a search for truth and the upholding of justice through the recording of public events and information and making that recording public in order to enable the public to make informed decisions on what is fair and just.

This makes journalism a custodian of public trust and as the custodian; it tends to refer to itself as the Fourth Estate. Although it is not a constitutionally established branch of government, as are the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary, it wields a lot of power, sometimes, more power than the official branches that it arrogated to itself that title. It is a title that evolved mainly from the United States and then, other countries copied the concept to imply equality with the constitutional branches; because of the power it wields, it too can be abusive and can be abused and it therefore needs to be checked.

The need to have a mechanism to check on the power of the media, thus has given rise to the creation of media councils, because, over time, an air of arrogance crept over the professionals; the arrogance went to the extent of implying that journalists are above the law, that they can break laws that everyone else is expected to obey and they do that in the name of “freedom of the press.” Whether to break the law in the name of information gathering is a moral question for the journalists with a conscious, it is an even bigger one than whether to make that information public. Those who may not know that they are breaking the law cannot be excused as ignorant; they have no business in a serious profession. Those who know are either criminals, or men and women of virtue, willing to suffer the consequences of their acts. Such people essentially engage in civil disobedience in the belief that, they are responding to a higher law than the one in the statutes. If that is so, they should then follow the advice given by Henry David Thoreau in his *On Civil Disobedience*, be ready for the consequences if one is to defy the monster called government. Journalists who break the law and are not ready to face the consequences should rethink their positions. Journalists who are not credible cannot fight corruption.

¹⁵ Nasanga Goretti Linda, “The New Press Bills in Uganda: Implications for National Communication Policy and Press Freedom,” *Africa Media Review*, Volume 11, Number 2, 1997, p.77.

¹⁶ Michael Kunczik, “Closing Remarks: Is there an International Ethics of Journalism,” in Michael Kunczik, editor, *Ethics in Journalism: A Reader on Their Perception in the Third World* (Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1999), pp. 257-258.

It would be in the journalist's interest to be perceived to have broken a bad law because of a higher public and moral good but, when that breach of law is for ordinary reason, or in order to fix a particular group or entity, then, the journalist and journalism, becomes discredited and loses its role as the custodian of public interests. It is therefore, in the interests of journalism to be above reproach economically, socially, and politically, it should not therefore be corrupt. The minute journalism is perceived to be corrupt, it loses that public trust role and whatever it puts out becomes questionable. The credibility of the journalist and the journal that he keeps is critical.

While the journalist as a person may have problems of credibility especially if he is perceived to be in the pocket of potential sources of news or the funding agency, the problem is compounded by the issue of publishers or media house ownership which then dictates the kind of coverage to be done. Owners tend to have a symbiotic relationship with the political power elites and the economic power barons. This symbiosis forces editors and journalists to kill stories on corruption that involve the interests of such power barons. This is especially so when there are interlocking interests, when the media house is part of a larger business hydra. The only way in which corruption in such a set up can be exposed is, if a rival media house takes up the story and runs with it. Given that most media houses have a collegial relationship with each other, this is unlikely to happen. This makes it difficult for media houses to investigate corruption elsewhere, when, they are involved in their own cover-ups.

Other than internal corruption in media houses, publishers and media owners also perpetuate another kind of corruption, by underpaying their own journalists who then, become susceptible to inducements from news sources or from political and commercial public relations manipulators. In itself, underpayment is exploitation and exploitation is an ingredient of corruption and this makes media owners who underpay their workers corrupt. By underpaying journalists, media houses lose the moral authority to tackle the evil of exploitation. It is rare to see stories of how employers exploit their workers in part, because, media houses are employers and by nature employers exploit workers. In fighting corruption, therefore, it would be advisable to investigate labour exploitation within the media and outside.

Other than underpayment, there is the pressure for an ill-funded, and more often an ill-trained reporter, to behave like the 'gutter press'. A distinction is made between self-respecting mainstream media and the 'gutter' press that seemingly thrives on inventions. While there is little surprise when the 'gutter' press invents news, the same is not expected of the mainstream media which loses credibility when it occasionally "invents" and "creates" news of events that never took place and yet these stories are printed and presented as if they are reality; such creations, inventions, and production of 'news', to meet the editor's demands, leads to corruption. This also implies that, the editor is not necessarily up to standard and does not have the ability to discern what might be fantasy and what might be real.

The editor, like the 'creative' journalist, may also be a victim of under-funding and poor training that, then, makes it easy for unscrupulous people to manipulate editors and their staff in order to achieve a given political and social agenda. This victimization helps to discredit the media and make it difficult to cover up corruption in other places.

The media loses credibility when they are perceived to be vindictive and to be pursuing an unreasonable political agenda. When this happens, there is a trend in journalism, to be selective, in the coverage of corruption issues. Some people, and institutions, receive widespread coverage in part, to make those associated with it unpopular while, at the same time, others that might be even more corrupt appear to be sanitized. Negative stories on those to be sanitized are squashed thereby giving the impression that there is collusion between media houses and particular offices and officers to cover up stories on corruption. Where that happens, it can be referred to as corruption in the media houses and is a display of double standards; in order for the media to play an effective role they should avoid double standards or perceptions of double standards in exposing corruption.

When a serious allegation of corruption becomes public, journalists have an obligation to press the issue and find out whether the allegation has substance or not. An example, of this kind of allegation, is the one made by Yash Pal Ghai, just before he left for Hong Kong to the effect that the commissioners in the Constitutional of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) are intellectually incompetent, corrupt, repeatedly received bribes, and misused public money. Ghai also gave the impression that, most of the delegates at Bomas were not trustworthy and that, half of them were irrelevant to the proceedings.¹⁷ The media, appear to have accepted Ghai's claims as a given instead of pressing him to provide the evidence for his allegations. One would wonder if there was a media partiality towards Ghai that is not accorded to others.

The implication of Ghai's statements that, the entire exercise that lasted almost four years was corrupt raises doubts about the validity of the process. Since the outcome of a fraudulent process, managed by corrupt people logically, is a fraud, the media should have questioned his continuous involvement in an activity that he seemingly believed was corrupt. For the media to accept Ghai's assertions, without taking him to task, would amount to a tacit condoning of an ethical impropriety that has long term ramifications for the future of this country. In this sense, Ghai has used the media to malign not only the other commissioners, of whom he was the official leader, but also, the delegates at the National Constitutional Conference where only a few were supposedly honest. If Bomas was full of dishonest people, organized by fraudulent commissioners whose pre-occupation was to siphon money from the treasury, can its product, the Zero Draft, be a genuine document deserving

¹⁷ Yash Pal Ghai interview with Dennis Onyango, "Ghai: Why I would not Accept to Chair Review Again," *Sunday Standard*, March 28, 2004, pp. 16-17.

serious attention? There is, therefore, a serious ethical problem in accepting an outcome, simply because a lot of money and time were spent, when that expenditure and process were corrupt.

Ghai's claims also raise a different issue: should the media have put the CKRC under closer scrutiny than it did, in order to help make the process clean? Was the failure due to a lack of information, or to the close relationship between the commission officials and journalists? If the corruption was persistent during the entire life of the CKRC, and the media somehow missed it, why did the anti-corruption authorities not investigate and produce evidence to convict the culprits? Would it not be in the public interest for the media to ask the other commissioners to defend themselves against Ghai's assertion that they are intellectually below expectation, that they took bribes, that they are corrupt, that they misused public funds, and that they employed their unqualified relatives in the commission?

The possibility of the media being used to settle scores raises the possibility of journalists becoming captive to sleek, political or commercial public relations operators, in order, to slant news. The trick is for the journalists to distinguish truth from the fantasy that public relations people, would like propagated. Failure to make that distinction raises doubts in the public mind and the impression that, journalists are engaging in fantasy can be devastating to the credibility of the media. Sometimes, journalistic fantasies occur when there is over zealousness to catch someone, to promote a certain position or to discredit certain groups. When this happens, the serious work that the journalist may have done, gets buried in doubts of credibility. In a way, journalistic fantasy is a form of corruption that erodes the media's ability to expose other forms of corruption.

Can one then say that there is excessive liberty which is subject to abuse? Whether it is excessive or not is debatable but, that, there has been abuse is not in doubt. In Kenya, so argued Joe Kadhi, there has emerged "a peculiar kind of journalistic liberty which has given way to writing commentaries that are not only partisan but, whose 'facts' could be challenged. Hiding behind powerful godfathers, such writers' are able to get away with murder."¹⁸ It is this kind of journalism that lead to a perception that the journalists are out to get someone or to discredit an entity that is harmful to the fight against corruption, especially if that perception is widespread. Kivutha Kibwana a former assistant minister in the Office of the President, believes that the media went out of its way, right from the start, to vilify Mwai Kibaki's regime and that, in league with KANU and members of LDP set out "to demonise NAK reformers."¹⁹ If Kibwana's claim was taken seriously, and if it is correct, would this not explain the zeal with which Kenya's leading media, *The Nation* and *The Standard* trumpeted certain questionable stories that in the process

¹⁸ Kadhi, "Anglophone Africa: Journalists-Puppets of the Proprietors?" p.90.

¹⁹ Kivutha Kibwana, "Constitutional Impasse: For How Long Does Wanjiku have to Wait?" *Sunday Nation*, March 28, 2004, p.15.

raised doubts about the credibility of the two media houses. *The Nation* came up with the story on the presidential “accident” at State House on the day that the president laid a wreath on Jomo Kenyatta’s grave. *The Nation*, later apologized for the misleading story, obtained from a ‘usually reliable source.’

On its part, *The Standard* appeared to have rushed to print a supposed confession, on the murder of Dr. Crispin Mbae. The matter is now in court in more ways than one. Such episodes gave the impression that the media wanted to fix the new regime and that impression tended to erode the credibility of the media. The perception that, the mainstream media are not credible gives rise to the emergence of an alternative press that seemingly addresses issues of concern that the mainstream media choose to ignore or are forced to ignore. When the mainstream media fail to seize the historical moment, and address issues that are of concern to the public, allegiance shifts to other sources of information which then, appear to be more credible than the existing ones. This is what happened in Kenya before the onset of multi-party politics and, on the eve of the 2002 general elections, when the mainstream media appeared to ignore the enthusiasm associated with the NARC campaign; it was a shoestring operator in the name of Citizen Radio that appeared to capitalize on that euphoria.

III

What then can then be done to ensure effective media involvement in fighting corruption in Kenya and elsewhere? In the first place, the media have done a very good job of fighting all types of corruption but their performance can improve in many ways. Media involvement is a necessity and starts from a moral and ethical position that corruption is evil and that it must be fought; in doing so, certain considerations arise.

First, there is need to emphasise or develop a philosophy of journalism that would stress a reflection on the nature of, and the dilemmas confronting journalism as a profession. Excessive stress on the craft of journalism dilutes its value and ability to defend itself as a profession properly.

Second, the level and type of education and training accorded potential journalists needs to be re-evaluated. A good education should produce an all round and well exposed critical thinker who may then specialize in a particular type of knowledge; such a well exposed person is unlikely to make unethical and moral blunders while practicing journalism. Philosophical and ethical education should probably come before craft training. It would also eliminate the likelihood of journalists being ignorant of their rights,²⁰ if not of the law. Knowledgeable journalists will be effective in fighting corruption.

²⁰ Makumi Mwagiru, “A Return to Basics: Media Rights as Fundamental Human Rights,” *Africa Media Review*, Volume 11, Number 2, 1997, pp.88-104.

Third, is the question of the prevailing political culture which is either conducive to honest governance or hostile. A democratic governing structure is conducive to effectively fighting corruption and for this reason, the media should guard against the erosion of democracy. It is not easy to expose corruption in a restrictive political climate, as happened in Kenya, only bold journalists would dare to expose malfeasance in a repressive regime. The international media, however, can help where the domestic media is contained.

Fourth is the question of media ownership, monopolies and conflicts of interests with corrupt institutions. The assumption that, freedom of the press means freedom of media owners to do what they want, when they want, and how they want, without being accountable should be discarded. Fighting corruption requires that conflicts of interests within the media are also fought, because they perpetuate corruption.

Fifth, part of the conflict within the media, is that media houses tend to be bad employers and exploit their reporters. In order to be effective in combating corruption, journalists need to be well paid and well provided for in terms of facilities to do their work. The norm, where journalists depend on the news source for basic needs creates a dependency that forces the journalist to slant news in favour of the provider; “facilitating fees” and ‘brown envelopes’ given to journalists are compromising the journalists. The exploitation of journalists by media owners is therefore, a form of corruption that ends up fuelling other forms of corruption.

Sixth, is the need for the media to acknowledge bias which can be personal, social, political, or what Christopher Meyers considered as “the effects of ideological indoctrination.”²¹ Such indoctrination can lead journalists into condoning some aspects of corruption or into an over zealousness to fix ideological rivals. When this indoctrination is coupled with hefty brown envelopes, corruption moves into high gear. One’s biases, therefore, should be acknowledged and effort made to minimize them in order to avoid interfering with journalistic objectivity. Journalists and editors have been known to use the media to fight their perceived enemies²² which in itself is media corruption.

Seventh, is the question of the journalists being aware of the implication of decisions to either ignore or pursue a particular angle to a story. The awareness of the socio-political consequences of a particular story and the decision to go with it, however, should also be considered as a moral and ethical one, rather than simply the fear of government reaction. This is the sense in which the editor and the journalist have to weigh the likely damage of a given story and try to balance a story with the likely benefits in terms of the public good. The question that rises is,

²¹ Christopher Meyers, “Appreciating W.D. Ross: On Duties and Consequences,” *Journal of Mass Media Ethics: Exploring Questions of Media Morality*, 2003, Volume 18, Number 2, p. 92.

²² Kadhi, “Anglophone Africa: Journalists-Puppets of the Proprietors?” pp. 85-87.

to what extent does such moral and ethical considerations determined, expose political and economic corruption? What is the responsibility of the media?

Eighth is the need for a public watchdog on the 'Fourth Estate' as it watches the other three constitutional branches of government. Given that, the media, as well as the political leaders, appear intent to manipulate the public by using their immense power,²³ there is need for an independent media council, similar to the India Press Council, which is independent of both the government and media houses.²⁴ It is also advisable for different media to develop their own monitoring systems, so as to enhance their professionalism in covering institutions like the parliament.²⁵

These eight suggestions are likely to enhance the media's ability to fight corruption, they are not the only ones but they cover many aspects that should be of concern to the media, the public and relevant institutions. They would help to promote accountability and the course of democracy. Because of the power that the media wields, many politicians and government bureaucrats would like to control the media,²⁶ which should not be allowed, and yet, at the same time, the media should not be allowed to run wild. The challenge is for an informed public to contain both the government and the media.

²³ Macharia Munene, "The Parliament, the Media, and the Public," Workshop of The Kenya Parliamentary Journalist Association (KPJA), Mount Kenya Safari Club, Nanayuki, January 22-23, 2004.

²⁴ P.B. Sawant, "Accountability in Journalism," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics: Exploring Questions of Media Morality*, 2003, Volume 18, Number 1, pp.16-28.

²⁵ Martin Mutua, "Challenges of Parliamentary Reporting," Workshop of The Kenya Parliamentary Journalist Association (KPJA), Mount Kenya Safari Club, Nanayuki, January 22-23, 2004.

²⁶ Macharia Munene, "Historical Perspectives on Politics and Journalism" in Charles Okgibo, editor, *Reporting Politics and Public Affairs* (Nairobi: African Council for Communication Education), pp.41-52.

Chapter Ten

Expectations and Disappointments in Africa-US Relations

Introduction

Africa and the United States have had a long relationship that has fluctuated from hostility to mutual amusements, high expectations and deep disappointments. That relationship can be presented in three broad segments. First, is the pre-independence period in Africa that ended in the early 1960s. Second, is the cold war period that lasted roughly thirty years from 1960 to 1990. Third, is the post-cold war period from 1990 to the present, 2005, this also falls into two parts, one relating to Africa in general and the other, focusing on Kenya's recent relationship with the United States. There were times when Africans considered the United States a source of inspiration and, there were other times when they were disappointed, and viewed the United States as a source of major concern. At present, Africa is deeply disappointed in the United States of America.

African pre-independence period

In the pre-independence period, relations between Africans and the Americans moved from being extremely negative to being a great source of inspiration. This period falls into two parts, before the First World War and after; one extremely disappointing and the other somehow inspiring to Africans. Before the First World War, Americans were part of the white world that brutalized Africans through slavery and colonialism; to Africans, the initial contact was one of slave trading and slavery and the lasting scar from that relationship is Liberia, which had been created as a dumping ground for unwanted black people who happened to be "free".¹ The continuing chaos in Liberia is part of that unpleasant legacy. Other than implanting Liberia in West Africa, the United States was a champion of the imperialistic Social Darwinist campaign after the 1880s that encouraged European

¹ Macharia Munene, *The Truman Administration and the Decolonisation of Sub-Saharan Africa, 1945-1952* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 1995), pp. 5-6.

colonization of Africa. The symbol, of American imperialism and belief in the right of white men to take African lands was, President Theodore Roosevelt.

Roosevelt visited Nairobi in 1909, and after leaving the White House, expounded on the right of white men to colonise and rule the rest of humanity. Roosevelt claimed that “it would be a crime if the white races failed to” turn Kenya into a white man’s country. Arguing that, black people “have not governed themselves and never could,”² he advocated the mounting of “every effort ... to favor the growth of a large and prosperous white population.” In that effort, he advised missionaries and colonial officials to “work hand in hand” in ruling Africans “with wisdom and firmness and when necessary, with severity.”³

African perceptions of the United States changed a little bit, especially after Africans accepted the establishment and reality of the colonial states. As Africans tried to figure out how to dismantle the colonial states, the United States became a source of inspiration that freedom from colonialism was possible and there were high expectations of what Americans can offer. That inspiration falls into two parts, the period between the world wars, 1919 to 1939 and the period between the end of the Second World War and 1960.

Between the world wars, the inspiration was associated with diverse African-Americans, each of whom was viewed as proof that blacks could excel despite many adversities. It was the inspiration of people such as Booker T. Washington with his Tuskegee Institute, Marcus Garvey with his *Negro World* publication, and W.E.B DuBois with his crusades for Pan-Africanism, which catalysed Mbiyu Koinange in Kenya, Kwame Nkrumah in the Gold Coast, and Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria to find their way into American colleges where they sharpened their political skills and became thorns in the flesh of the colonial state. One of their favourite imports into Africa from the US was Abraham Lincoln’s 1863 Gettysburg Address on governments being of the people, for the people, and by the people.

The United States emerged from the Second World War militarily, technologically, economically, and most important, morally strong as an anti-colonial force. This image, however, quickly dissipated with the onset of the Cold War which, argues John B. Judis of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, “shaped and distorted the United States reaction to the powerful movements against imperialism.”⁴ Subsequently, the United States appeared to be caught in a bind between condoning colonialism to please the European colonialists and projecting itself as a champion of anti-colonialism. Its best effort was Harry S. Truman’s 1949 Point Four program, which was well intentioned but poorly implemented.⁵ It was,

² Theodore Roosevelt, “The Prospect of British East Africa”, Speech made at a dinner in Nairobi on August 3rd, 1909, as reprinted in Kenya Weekly News, August 14, 1959, pp. 44, 46.

³ Macharia Munene, *The Truman Administration*, pp.16-17.

⁴ John B. Judis, “Imperial Amnesia,” *Foreign Policy*, July/August, 2004, p. 55.

⁵ Macharia Munene, *The Truman Administration*, pp. 154-155.

Tom Mboya of Kenya noted in 1956, perceived “as aid to colonial powers to ensure their continued ability to run colonies.”⁶

In the second half of the 1950s, however, the United States made adjustments to regain its inspirational role with Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts as the symbol of American empathy with colonized Africans. He attracted attention by condemning French colonialism in Algeria and by helping to fund the 1959 and 1960 East African student’s airlift to the United States. One of the major benefits of the airlift is that more than forty years later, there is a US President whose father, Barrack Obama, was in the 1959 airlift. After becoming president, Kennedy not only continued with the student airlifts, he also mounted the peace corps program whose graduates today run many activities as experts, academics, diplomats, and heads of organizations dealing with Africa. The assassination, in November 1963, of this symbol of American support for anti-colonialism, marked the end of the period of inspiration and many Africans felt the loss.

The cold war period

Relations between the US, and various independent African states, changed from being one of inspiration to one of disappointment as, the United States was identified with the remaining racist colonies of Southern Africa. The racist colonies understood US weakness and played up their claims to be bastions of Western civilization against communist inspired groupings, which happened to be black. The fact that, racism was rampant in official circles in Washington reinforced the image of the United States being in league with racist regimes. This impression, was personified by Ronald Reagan’s claim that, South Africa’s apartheid system was similar to racism in the United States and that, South Africa had been on the same side with the United States in the World Wars. He said in 1981, “Can we abandon this country [South Africa] that has stood beside us in every war we’ve ever fought?” again in 1985 he said, “They have eliminated the segregation that we once had in our own country.”⁷ In the post-colonial period, therefore, the sore point between Africans and the Americans, in general, revolved around Southern Africa and as a result, Americans were perceived to be a source of disappointment rather than inspiration.

Besides concern on the perceived US position on Southern Africa, African countries had unfortunately attained independence at the height of the cold war. Despite efforts to remain non-aligned, they tended to gravitate from one side to the other in a new type of master-state/client-state relationship called *neo-colonialism*. Neo-colonialism had a symbiotic relationship between individual leaders in a

⁶ Tom Mboya, “*Our Revolutionary Tradition: An African View*,” *Current History*, December 1956, Vol. 31, No. 184, p. 345.

⁷ Russell Mokhiber and Robert Weissman, “Remembering Reagan,” *Common Dreams*, Friday, June 11, 2004.

client-state protecting the interests of the master-state and the leaders of the master-state who in turn, protected those leaders from their own people. The United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France, Belgium, the Scandinavian countries, China, and Cuba were the main master-states or neo-colonial powers that propped up various regimes in client-states.

Each of the African countries found itself under the sway and influence of these master states, some by choice, and others by coercion or by a combination of the two factors. In the 1960s, leaders of countries like Kenya and Ivory Coast deliberately chose to be in the western camp and did not mind the epithet of being called neo-colonial states. Tanzania, in contrast, was representative of those that tried to distance themselves from capitalism but not necessarily from the west. The result was an ideological and social hybrid that was dependent on the leader, Julius Nyerere, and a lot of support from 'socialistic' Scandinavian countries. Similarly, Guinea, under Sekou Toure, rejected French paternalism but not necessarily France and this rejection, gave both the Soviet Union, and then the Americans, opportunity to "help". There were others, however, whose neo-colonial condition was not a matter of choice by leaders but rather, one of imposition. This was the case in the Congo, where the United States and Belgium helped to overthrow Patrice Lumumba, and to impose Joseph Mobutu, as their man, in Kinshasa.

There also emerged a number of leaders who played the Cold War game to get what they wanted, flirted with Washington, Moscow or Beijing and had no problems switching sides whenever it suited their purpose. Gaafar el Numeiri of Sudan and Somali's Mohammed Siad Barre were particularly good at this game. Both, had grabbed power in 1969 and had initially claimed to be some sort of Marxists or Socialists and expected and received support from the eastern block. They later changed, and invited the Americans, to be their patrons. In the case of Somalia, the inducement to change positions was partly due to the emergence of Ethiopia as a Marxist state in 1974 when Haile Selassie was overthrown.

In the 1970s, leaders who claimed to be Marxists overthrew a pro-American regime in Ethiopia and defeated Portuguese colonialism in Africa; this implied a setback for the United States. Among these, were the new leaders in Ethiopia, led by Mengistu Haile Mariam, who then, invited Cuba and the Soviet Union to help them stay in power. To them, Marxism was an ideology for countering American supported tyrannies. With the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Africa, those who replaced the colonial states in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau were avowed Marxists. In the case of Angola, it became necessary for the Cubans, with Soviet logistical support, to counter South Africa's invasion, with America's blessings. Subsequently, Angola became a prolonged ideological battlefield that deteriorated into looting and civil war, with no ideological validity.

Whether the leaders of countries espoused capitalism, socialism, or Marxism as a way of ensuring their survival through external support, they tended to plunge their

countries into deep dependency, at a time that, *neo-colonialism* as a doctrine of control, was systematically losing value. In the West, the failures of *neo-colonialism* became apparent with the humiliation of the United States in Vietnam and Iran, and with the victory of Marxists in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau. Relying on individual leaders, in a symbiotic relationship, was, at the time, viewed as an indication of unreliability; and thus the United States was forced to shift positions and to abandon what, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, termed “the essence of postwar American foreign policy.”⁸

In rejecting the essence of postwar foreign policy, the United States reviewed its position and looked for a way out of its predicament in order to restore a sense of self-worth and purpose. It decided to be critical of leaders who, as John Lewis Gaddis argued, had outlived their usefulness. It wanted to be viewed as identifying with the aspirations of ordinary people instead of the wishes of the ruling elite.⁹ In the process, the United States appears to have developed two strategies. First, was the strategy of reducing or minimizing bilateral dealings with the leaders of Third World countries, and to emphasise multilateralism. Second, was to adopt new rhetoric in international discourse targeting particularly, Third World countries. Both strategies had the effect of reducing visible United States involvement with leaders who had outlived their usefulness, and to make neo-colonialism irrelevant. The irrelevance of neo-colonialism gave way to the emergence of post-modern colonialism.

Post-modern colonialism appears to be confused given its stress on relativity and the tendency to devalue the role of states and particular regimes. Within it, as a concept, is a claim by manipulators in the master states that, they understand the victim, meaning the African, in his own context. That understanding is mainly by foreigners who then explain to the Africans how to understand themselves. Since victims of post-modern colonialism are not expected to do their own understanding, they can then be advised, guided, instructed, and ordered to downsize the states, institutions and services. Those who do the understanding, instruct the victims to open up the country to international operators, in the name of liberalization and privatization and yet they do not assume responsibility for their exploitative behavior. This “understanding”, therefore, is like a palliative to the victim not to complain too much, given that, his concerns and perceptions are reasonably accommodated.

The interests of the manipulators are promoted by bureaucrats in the IMF and World Bank who, behave like ‘missionaries’ for the gospel of liberalization, in small and weak countries. Behind such missionaries, is the military might of the

⁸ Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), p. 29.

⁹ G. Macharia Munene, “Cold War Disillusionment and Africa,” in Macharia Munene, J. Olewe-Nyunya, and Korwa Adar, editors, *The United States and Africa: From Independence to the End of the Cold War* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995), pp.25-49.

master states that do not need good reasons to flex their muscles. It is these 'missionaries', who are most vocal in blaming the victims, mainly Africans, and then make it their business to reorganize the African states and resources in such a way that it hurts the African. They emphasise the failure of states to provide those services, which in turn, justifies calling for privatization of services within the state, meaning, denying the state the right and ability to provide services. They also mean that foreigners should have a right to expropriate and control a country's institutions. This way, the master states remain officially invisible as they enjoy the fruits of global exploitation without getting the blame.

The strategy of blaming the victim also undermines the victim's ability to demand redress by removing the basis of demanding redress. The logic of blame shifting in which, those who suffer because of Western activities in the world are to blame for their suffering, is initially orchestrated at the intellectual level, before, being imposed on the ground by various agents and functionaries of post-modern colonialism which include: diplomats from the master states, IMF officials, and local NGOs and civil society operatives. The strategy of blaming the victims lays the groundwork, first, for the intellectual rationalisation of denying assistance to the victims, and, second, for providing the appropriate leverage to dictate laws to the victim countries. This way, control is tightened as the victim is made to take responsibility for whatever may go wrong. In this way, functionaries and officials on the ground, become instruments of blame shifting and post-modern colonialism.

The strategy of employing multilateral institutions as instruments of control in which Western powers ganged up as a collective unit to fix previous client states crystallized in the early 1980s. This coincided with the presence into political power in key Western countries of like minded "conservative" leaders who had little time for Third World countries. These included Ronald Reagan in the United States, Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom, Brian Mulrooney in Canada, Kare Willoch in Norway, and Poul Schluter in Denmark. Reagan and Thatcher appeared to lead the others in forcing client states to listen to instructions from the multilateral institutions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, before they could deal with them. At the World Bank, for instance, Robert MacNamara was replaced by banker, A. W. Clausen, who had little time for "development" projects. The new team, controlling power in the West, therefore, was one that rejected "special consideration" for poor countries and insisted that they compete with the "developed" ones in a neo-liberal economic framework.¹⁰ Among the first victims of this new trend was Julius Nyerere of Tanzania who, was abandoned by the previously 'socialistic' Scandinavians. Nyerere retired and,

¹⁰ Peter Gibbon, "The World Bank and African Poverty, 1973-91," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Volume 30, Number 2, June 1992, p. 198; Roger C. Riddell, "Aid Performance and Prospects," in I. William Zartman, editor, *Europe and Africa: The New Phase* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1993), p. 144.

admitted failure in the face of the new instruments of control; the instruments of post-modern colonialism.

The instruments of control were supplemented by a new political rhetoric that essentially promoted NGOs and civil society in a process of making the United States to appear to be on the side of the people. One of the ways it did this was to create a bipartisan organ, the National Endowment for Democracy in 1982/83 whose mission was to promote American values of free press, civil society, trade unionism, and political activism. It also entailed the support for NGOs and most important, the promotion of civil society, which then made a lot of noise about political pluralism and the shortcomings of their own states; repeating the political rhetoric of human rights, democracy, conditionalities as they went on to urge “donors” to withhold “aid”. It is this development that explains the pressure that the United States started putting on the leaders of client states such as Moi of Kenya and Mobutu of Zaire in the 1980s, long before the end of the cold war.

Post cold war period

The end of the cold war simply reinforced a trend that appeared fresh because, President George Bush, proclaimed a New World Order that, unhampered by the Cold war, would promote American values by force if necessary. There are four things that can be said about Africa and this New World Order. First, a number of African leaders were caught unawares, despite numerous signposts in the 1980s. In the process, they tended to be surprised with American behavior when they should not have been. Second, Africans noticed that Americans had double standards in the application of American values to African countries. Third, there is growing African effort to adjust to the new realities of American unilateralism in global activities. This adjustment has been in one of two ways. One is to play up to the United States in some areas and the other is through reasoned resistance to the imposition. Fourth, is the realization that the United States, despite its preponderous military power has been losing power, particularly with the Bush “grand strategy” of invading countries, and instead appears like a “monster”.¹¹

One of the fundamental things about the New World Order was the number of regimes that were destabilized in Africa; instead of getting the support they used to get, they found themselves at the receiving end of American hostility. Samuel K. Doe had grabbed power in Liberia in 1980, and liked to portray himself as America’s best friend in Africa, he was well received in the White House. Charles Taylor, an escapee from a Massachusetts prison, ousted him and plunged Liberia

¹¹ John Lewis Gaddis, “Grand Strategy in the Second Term,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2005, pp. 6-7; Judis, “Imperial Amnesia,” pp. 55-59.

into protracted chaos.¹² How one escapes from a Massachusetts jail to lead a rebellion in West Africa is itself a curiosity. While the United States has a special moral interest in Liberia, its involvement elsewhere is less apparent. For example, Siad Barre had received a lot of American aid but was left to his own fate when the rebels intensified their attacks of Somalia.

As Somalia disintegrated into a human disaster, the United States helped to mobilize the United Nations and led the intervention through Operation Restore Hope. This humanitarian coalition turned into a farce, Somali warriors fought and defeated American soldiers along the streets of Mogadishu; forcing the new Clinton administration to cut its losses and quit. Somalia was a disaster for Africa and for future US involvement in other parts of Africa, indeed, the farce played out on CNN, influenced reaction to the genocide in Kigali.

Zaire's Mobutu, a man imposed on the Congolese by the Americans, was another victim of the reassessment by the United States of its dealings with obnoxious regimes in client states. Having outlived his usefulness and on becoming a liability, the United States turned against Mobutu and helped to sponsor anti-Mobutu forces that succeeded in ousting Mobutu in 1996. Leading these forces, were the "new leaders" of Africa whose common attribute was that they appeared fresh, untainted with old political baggage, and had grabbed power through the gun, rather than, the ballot.

The leader of this "new leaders" group, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, shot his way to office in 1986, and is now under pressure from the same Americans who had been singing his praises. He had helped Paul Kagame to take power in Rwanda in 1994 and in turn, Kagame helped Laurent Kabila to oust Mobutu in Congo, in 1996. Africans noticed American double standards in that while initially pressuring other countries to be "democratic," "transparent," and "accountable," the United States was relatively silent on Uganda whose activities raised questions. The reason, it appeared was that Museveni was ready to go along with whatever Washington said, and what Washington wanted had little to do with democracy. The tragedy for Museveni is that, having given in to almost anything the Americans demanded,¹³ he appears to have outlived his usefulness and there is currently a lot of pressure to cut "aid" to Uganda.¹⁴

¹² Adekeye Adebajo, "Liberia: A Warlord's Peace," in Stephen John Sredman, Donald Rothchild, Elizabeth M. Cousens, editors, *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 599-630.

¹³ Robert Pinkney, *The International Politics of East Africa* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2001), pp. 182-184; Nzomba Kitonga, "International Criminal Court: Immunity for US Soldiers: Kenya Must 'Unsign' Now," *The East African*, Opinion, April 25-May 1, 2005, p. 15.

¹⁴ A. David Kaiza, *The East African*, April 25-May 1, 2005, p.5; A. Mutumba Lule, "Uganda Faces Aid Cuts Over Graft," *The East African*, June 27-July 3, 2005, p.3.

Focus on Kenya

Uganda's neighbor to the East, Kenya, received different treatment which, in turn, raised the issue of hypocrisy and double standards in US-Africa dealings. While to Americans, Museveni appeared to be young, fresh and accommodative of IMF and World Bank demands, Daniel arap Moi appeared old, stale, and a liability to American interests. Museveni was to be upheld, Moi to be pressured out, despite his efforts, to remain in good books with the Americans. Moi had been one of those leaders who were caught flatfooted by the new global changes and it was in Kenya that experiments on diplomatic practice regarding Africa were conducted. It was in Kenya where Americans first mooted the idea of conditionalities in the 1980s. It was also in Kenya where the United States inaugurated diplomatic noise making in public, as a way of pressuring African leaders to do the bidding of the master state. It started with Smith Hempstone, a journalist, who had campaigned to be appointed ambassador to Nairobi where he had hoped to get along with Moi, a fellow political conservative. Initially his noise making appeared crude and it was only the fact that the United States is a big power that saved him from expulsion. When Norway for instance, tried to imitate the Americans, its diplomats were sent packing back to Oslo. Other Western countries followed the American example and as a result diplomatic noise making in public since 1990 has become so common that it is the expected norm. Neither the Kenyan political class nor the ordinary Kenyan is shocked anymore that a representative of a donor country or institution would engage in diplomatic noise making.

Pressure on the Moi regime succeeded and he agreed to retire and as a result of democratic elections in 2002, the Kibaki regime took over the affairs of Kenya. In theory, the Kibaki regime and the Bush administration should be on the best of terms and yet they are not. The two countries have some things in common. The political class in both countries subscribes to a notion of nationalistic liberal economics, which is not necessarily international liberal economics. Both countries can claim to have successfully fought for independence against British cultural and economic stranglehold, albeit, they had to deal with the presence of influential anglophiles in key policy making positions.

There are additional similarities that include the amazing capacity of the Bush administration in the United States and the Kibaki regime in Kenya to shoot themselves in the foot. Both countries have over time experienced bouts of perceived questionable dealings, if not grand corruption. In the United States there were the robber barons, Teapot Dome, Enron, and Halliburton while in Kenya there has been Goldenburg, Anglo-leasing, and deforestation. Further, both countries have been victims of international terrorism, Kenya in 1998 because of its close identification with the West, and the United States in 2001 because it is the perceived leader of the West. The Americans and the Kenyans are proud and arrogant and tend to jealously guard what they consider to be their interest.

The reason why, with these commonalities, there is friction between the two countries, it can be argued, is due to factors pertaining to perceptions of interests and how to advance and protect those interests. These range from administrative, political, economic, and international image and respect. Indeed, the new regime of Mwai Kibaki made it clear that it wanted to make independent decisions on what its interests were and this decision was automatically in conflict with what Bush had said: that countries had to toe the American line. It is important for Kenya to regain the respect it once had in Africa and the world, a respect that it lost in the 1980s and 1990s. Regaining such respect in Africa and the world could not be done by being subservient, or appearing to be subservient, to the dictates of America and Britain.

One of those independent decisions that Kenya made is that it should not be party to international irregularity by endorsing decisions that made a mockery of the United Nations. This decision, brought Kenya into sharp conflict with the Americans and the British, whose interpretation of what Kenya had to do to be respected was the direct opposite. When the US, in March 2003, attacked Iraq and ignored the United Nations, they expected dependent countries to toe the line; they were not amused by Kenya's independent position and thereafter became openly hostile to Kibaki's regime.¹⁵ The United States and the United Kingdom mounted a blame shifting campaign in which the made the victim, Kenya, appeared the villain, responsible for international terrorism,¹⁶ a test of wills thereore appeared to be in the offing as Kenya resisted the intensified pressure. During the long awaited Bush trip to Africa, the United States decided to skip Nairobi using the dubious claim that Kenya was not safe. Raila Odinga, Minister for Roads and Housing ridiculed the US claim by pointing out, "you are not issuing similar warnings for Egypt, Jordan or Saudi Arabia where there are more terrorist cells."¹⁷ The difference was that while Uganda had supported the invasion of Iraq and had even agreed to exempt American military personnel from international law requirements when they committed war crimes.¹⁸ Kenya had not. Instead of going to Kampala to "greet" Bush, Kibaki went to Maputo, Mozambique, to attend the Africa Union meeting; that way he upheld Kenya's interests and thereby gained respect in Africa.

As Kenya started gaining respect in Africa, Kibaki turned his attention to the global issue in which Africans are side-lined in trade. He talked to ministers of trade from

¹⁵ Macharia Munene, "Africa and Shifting Global Power Relationships," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Summer 2005, Volume 29, Number 2, pp. 120-121.

¹⁶ Mwagiru, Makumi, "The Nationalisation of Terrorism: National Response to Terrorism through National Legislation," in Makumi Mwagiru and Maria Nzomo, eds., *International Responses to Terrorism* (Nairobi: Heinrich-Boll/IDS, forthcoming).

¹⁷ Charles Cobb Jr. "US Terror Warnings and Bush Failure to Visit Anger Nairobi," *allAfrica.com News*, June 24, 2003.

¹⁸ See Story, "East Africa: US Warming up to 'Willing East African States,'" *The East African*, March 28, 2003.

20 Eastern and Southern African countries and presented Kenya as an example of the adverse trading practices that Africans are subjected to by developed countries. Kenya, he stated, was “suffering from arbitrary bans and other unilateral constraints placed on our exports into the European Union.” Noting that the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules were hostile to developing countries, he called for a concerted African joint effort in confronting the WTO, declaring that African countries must take proactive positions on international trade instead of reacting to what was “already on the table....We must, therefore, spare no effort in ensuring that we negotiate predictable and acceptable terms of trade and market access.” To spearhead Kenya’s role in forging an African position that would demand acceptable terms of trade and access to markets, Mukhisa Kituyi, Kenya’s minister for trade and industry, emphasized the “need to integrate in order to compete effectively on the global market.”¹⁹ At the WTO Conference at Cancun, Mexico, in September 2003, Kituyi therefore ended up not simply as the leader of the Kenya delegation, but rather, the spokesman for the Third World position on opening up markets in the West as well as protecting the economic interests of the poor countries. This resistance to what was “already on the table” shocked the Europeans and the Americans; it was essentially the first time that Third World countries were better prepared than their counter-parts from the developed world.

Kenya’s performance at Cancun, supported by key Third World countries, raised its profile in terms of international respectability but the government was still walking a tight-rope between meeting the expectations of the Americans and serving the wishes of its citizens. The issue of international terrorism was one that Kenyans believed would be used to return them to the days of repression, and effectively recolonise them; they thus were vocal in opposing any government attempt to force parliament to enact a foreign engineered law that would effectively enslave Kenyans. Since the US and Britain were particularly interested in forcing such a law, a perception developed in Kenya that they were looking for excuses to punish the country for not supporting their invasion of Iraq and more recently for the position taken at Cancun. Subsequently, Kenyans are increasingly aware and alert to unreasonable external pressure and are in turn pressing the government not to cave in to external dictates. The government no longer has unlimited power to commit the country without answering to the citizens. In this case, the people, through their parliament probably saved Kenya from embarrassing itself with ill-advised legislations, clearly at the behest of other countries.

So what is the general picture? It is one in which Kenya’s desire to make independent decisions is hampered by its over dependency which gives leverage to Western powers, led by the United States and Britain, which came to believe that they had a right to do anything they wanted and make demands like colonial

¹⁹ Eric Orina and Mburu Mwangi, “Kenya Wants Fair Trade Terms: Kibaki Laments Arbitrary and Unilateral Actions by the EU,” *Daily Nation* on the Web, Thursday, May 29, 2003.

governors. British High Commissioner Edward Clay, for instance, reportedly had the habit of flying into Kenyan airspace without a licence and no one would question him.²⁰ In mounting pressure, these two powers have at times been very crass, given that their apparent intent is to humiliate the Kibaki regime into submitting to their dictates rather than to reach an amicable understanding on beneficial mutual interests. In turn, the Kibaki regime compounds the situation by seemingly tolerating people of questionable values, who can be used to undermine the regime, in policy making positions. This is a weakness that the British and the Americans have been quick to exploit. The British, for instance, have recently been leading the attack in the form of diplomatic noise making and the United States has been playing the supportive role to British desires in Kenya—probably as a reward for the full support by Blair for Bush.

This was best demonstrated in the strange events of January and February 2005 involving British High Commissioner Edward Clay, Ethics Permanent Secretary, John Githongo, and US Ambassador William Bellamy. First, Githongo complained of continuing corruption in high places, then he went to Switzerland where he held talks with economic leaders and scholars at Davos, was honoured with a nomination by the World Economic Forum as a “Young Global Leader Under 40,” and ended up in Oslo, Norway.²¹ Clay entered the picture, appearing, as *The Sunday Standard* columnist, Jean Kamau observed, “in our midst wailing louder than the bereaved about government accountability,”²² He made accusations of corruption at the Hotel Intercontinental in Nairobi while participating in a corrupt, Journalist of the Year Award (JOYA) function.²³ This was also after, Health Minister Charity Ngilu complained, that Clay had “tried to persuade me to bend the drugs procurement procedures in order to allow Glaxo-SmithKline, a British pharmaceutical firm, to continue supplying without facing competition.”²⁴ A few days after Clay’s lament, Githongo left Oslo for London from where he wrote his letter of resignation and was allowed to “stay as a guest for an indefinite period.” He was also one of the important mourners at the funeral of the Prime Minister of Georgia, Zurab Zhvania in Tbilisi. Other mourners included Senator Richard Lugar

²⁰ Baffour Anbkomah, “Flying Without Licence,” *New Africa*, July 2005, pp. 6-7.

²¹ Martin Mutua and Gitau wa Njenga, “Githongo ‘Resigned Abroad Because he Feared for His Life,’” *The Standard*, February 9, 2005.

²² Jean Kamau, “Viewpoint: Let’s Not Do as Donors Say, But as They Did in the Past,” *The Sunday Standard*, April 3, 2005.

²³ Kipkoech Tanui and Argwings Odera, “You are not Serious About Corruption,” *The Standard*, February 3, 2005; Editorial, “KUJ’s Night of Graft,” *The Standard*, February 4, 2005; Kwendo Oponga, “Rejected Trophy, Missing TV Sets, and Saga of KUJ’s Shameful Night,” *The Sunday Standard*, February 6, 2005; Mugo Njeru, “Police Probe Journalists’ Awards,” *Daily Nation*, February 4, 2005.

²⁴ Wanjohi Kabukuru, “Kenya: Sir Edward’s Crusade Has Clay Feet,” *New African*, Issue Number 440, May 2005, p. 32.

of the United States Foreign Affairs Senate Committee, World Bank President James Wolfenson, and Russian Transport Minister Igor Levitin.²⁵ After the funeral, American Ambassador, Bellamy, lauded Clay and announced that his country was cutting aid to Kenya because Githongo had resigned. This announcement was made while Bellamy was addressing a “private luncheon of the British Business Association.”²⁶ The coincidence of events appeared strange and probably designed, as Paul Muite, MP for Kabete, claimed, “to bring down the Kibaki administration.”²⁷

Conclusion

For Africans and Kenyans in particular, the image of the United States fluctuates between being a source of inspiration and high expectations, a big social cultural influence, on one side, to being an object of disappointment on the other. The United States is a country that is looked upon to offer moral leadership because it has more of the military, technological, and economic might than any other country; many times it has played this role well whether it is in financing UN operations or providing disaster relief. It has encouraged development approaches including NEPAD and “African solutions to African problems” that has been embraced by the political class in Africa. The admiration for things American is apparent in the electronic and print media, educational institutions, music and the cinema. Africans, closely follow events and elections in the United States and were amused when Americans had problems counting the ballots in Florida; some even offered to help the Americans to organize the counting.

African amusement falters when the the dark side of the United States takes over and its perceived hypocrisy and double standards become a hallmark. Africans hear Americans talk of freedom of movement of people and goods only to see the same Americans closing their doors to everyone else. The idea of “open doors”, it becomes clear, is for others to open their doors for the Americans to come in freely but not for others to enter the American market or country. As an object of disappointment, Africans view the United States as a brute, mean and bullying country that arrogantly ignores the international laws that it expects others to follow. They see the United States piously talk of democracy and then, ignore the democratic wishes of others; seemingly to pursue its interests vigorously with out letting anyone else tell it what those interests should be and yet, it will hold the right to tell other countries what their interests should be and how they should

²⁵ Gitau wa Njenga, in London, “Anti-graft Chief to Stay on in London,” *The Standard*, February 8, 2005.

²⁶ Patrick Mathangani and Andrew Teyie, “US Freezes Aid,” *The Standard*, February 9, 2005.

²⁷ John Mbaria, “Corruption Crisis in Kenya: Diplomats Accused of Phony Anti-Corruption Crusade,” *The East African*, February 7-13, 2005, p. 19; Wanjohi Kabukuru, “Kenya: Sir Edward’s Crusade Has Clay Feet,” *New African*, Issue Number 440, May 2005, pp. 32-34.

pursue them. It is this arrogance that blinds the Americans such that they are surprised when other countries, particularly small countries, decide to pursue their own interests just as vigorously.

It is in this context that Africans, who have held high expectations of the Americans for a long time, are disappointed with the United States in a number of ways. These include the perceived American tendency to bully and threaten countries, ignoring international law, and the strange expectation that other countries would blindly follow the United States. It is, in addition, disappointing because the United States ignores the essence of freedom and democracy and the importance of that essence especially to a people barely coming out of tyranny. That essence, is the right to say “no” to things that do not make sense, and if that right is taken away, then the people and their countries are not free. By appearing to deny people in African countries the right to say “no”, the United States has been very disappointing.

Africans should prepare for more disappointments and scale down their expectations of the United States given that its self-proclaimed New World Order actually means that the United States would be free to impose its will on the globe at any time, on whomever it wants, and in any manner that it wants. African states, therefore, are to be pressed to liberalize internally while accepting American global ‘uniformity’.²⁸ In part, this is because the United States appears to believe, as P. Godfrey Okoth argued, that “International Relations are relations of power [and that] legality and legitimacy are mere decorations.”²⁹ This belief that legality and legitimacy are mere decorations is probably because such laws were meant to regulate European fighting on how to acquire human, material and territorial resources outside Europe.³⁰ Those not of European origins were not expected to use those laws to their advantage.

This then is the perceived hypocrisy and contradictions that have made the United States lose influence. Disappointed Africans have, in turn, become very vocal in pointing to the hypocrisy, contradictions, and as Nelson Mandela noted, possible application of international racism. Because of this, Africans are increasingly resisting pressure on things that do not make sense, as a way of safeguarding African interests. Having for a long time had high expectations of the United

²⁸ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1997), p.40.

²⁹ Pontian Godfrey Okoth, “The Dishonest Broker in America: A Diplomatic Historians Tour of US-African Relations since 1945,” Inaugural Lecture Series No. 1, September 17, 2003, Maseno University, Maseno Kenya, p. 20.

³⁰ Siba N. Grovogui, *Sovereigns, Quasi-Sovereigns, and Africans: Race and Self-Determination in International Law* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 54-76.

States, with all its problems, to be logical and right where it matters, Africans are deeply disappointed in the American threats and inability to make sense and persuade through reason. By failing to make sense, Americans have been losing influence.³¹

³¹ Munene, “*Africa and Shifting Global Power Relationships*,” pp. 117-124.

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Historical Reflections on Kenya

This book thematically tackles issues that relate to the perpetual struggle between the forces of control and the forces of mental and intellectual liberation in Africa and Kenya in particular. The book addresses the colonial legacy of poverty creation, as well as the socio-political conditioning of Africans to dislike each other and to be irresponsible and disunited in the face of external threats. Poverty, hatred of other Africans, and excessive dependency on European powers can be traced to the policies adopted by colonial officials.

Related to these issues, is post-colonial Kenya's attempts to address the political developments, the involvement of different types of media in those developments, Kenya's foreign policy, and the problem of political party transition. Ultimately, there are topical issues that continue to affect Kenya which include the question of coalition politics, the lessons of the 2002 elections, the media and corruption, parliament and foreign policy, and Africa's relations with the United States of America.

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